

Letters....

I would like to say a huge thank you to Anita Lord and members of her Dancing school for raising £270 for Shotley School Library. I have had enormous fun spending the money and am waiting for the story sacks to arrive for the younger children and I have ordered more fantastic books for the older children. For those of you who don't know her, Anita started her dance school at the Shipwreck nearly 3 years ago and she has been an inspiration to both young and old (well the adults in her classes aren't that old)! Tuesdays wouldn't be the same without her. Thank you,

Gill Packard - Shotley Gate

I agree totally with J Moxon's letter in the last issue – that dog poo should be bagged but PLEASE having bagged it DON'T then toss the bag into the nearest undergrowth or hedge!

On 18 March, 10 adult volunteers plus one small helper all recruited from Shotley Sailing Club, spent 2 ½ hours litter picking around Shotley Gate as part of Spring Clean Suffolk week. I am ashamed to say that the public arrears of our end of the village netted around 30 bin liners full! By far the worst job the volunteers had, though, was removing the bags of dog poo hung like Christmas decorations from trees and hedges. The worst culprit appears to shop at Morrisons and walks into the Stourside woods via the public footpath on the corner of Lower Harlings – YOU'LL KNOW WHO YOU ARE! Please stop it – there are special bins provided at both gates to the park on Stourside

Glenda Parsonson - Shotley Gate

Please let us have your letters, articles etc., at least two weeks in advance of issue date. Diary entries should be sent to Anna Long. If you have anything you would like included in 'Noticeboard', please get in touch.

Starboard

Thank you to the supporters and many friends of Starboard for your generosity during our campaign against the building of a container port at Bathside Bay, Harwich.

We needed to employ a solicitor to fight our case and with your help considerable funds were raised for this.

Unfortunately it looks as if the expansion will go ahead. As there is now no course of action left open within our modest means, the group decide to donate all remaining funds to the Shotley Village Hall Committee of Management and to the Viking Forest Project, equally, as groups that contribute to the well being of the Village

Starboard Committee.

Shotley Open Gardeners - S.O.G.S.!

Your entry form, for 'Open Gardens 2006.' obtained from, signed, and delivered back to 4, Orwell View Road is eagerly anticipated by the organisers.

Our motto, 'Show Shotlev as it is' - encourages every gardener who loves their garden to share it with others - no-one need wonder if their garden is good enough; Open Gardens is not a competition but a chance to talk to like-minded people, perhaps give advice to or learn from your visitors. If you missed the 31st March deadline don't despair; spare entry forms will be available for you, however, to allow time with drawing & printing maps of participating gardens, allotments and ticketing, etc. they should be returned to 4, Orwell View by April 16th please.



Feed the Birds...

This year, as last year the clinging cold should persuade us to keep providing feed for a little while yet. A cold, late spring seems on the cards for the second year in succession. If we want to help wild birds we will need to act according to the conditions. Feed birds at regular times if you are able. First thing in the morning is best. Once you have started to put food out continue until the spring has really got going and there is

plenty of natural food available. There is some evidence that some of the food types we provide have killed nestlings of some bird species, so unless the weather turns unseasonably harsh it is wise to stop feeding in late spring and during summer. Why not put out suitable nesting material instead of food in spring and summer? Put out straw, pet combings and cotton wool.

Remember that the more kinds of food you supply, the wider the variety of species you will attract to your garden. White bread? The nutritional value is not great and it is difficult for birds to break up. (soak white bread in water before putting it out). Why not provide a variety of foods instead? Fat (suet), cheese, dry oats, oatmeal, maize flakes, seeds, nuts, dried fruit, apples (apples might bring Redwing and Fieldfare, on holiday here from Scandinavia, in hard weather) and baked potato. Dessicated coconut should not be put out as it can swell inside the birds.

Don't forget clean water all year round for drinking and splashing.

We don't have to provide artificial food. A lawn is attractive to us and birds. The birds will be out lawn-gazing for insects and worms regularly and will be easy to watch. The right plants in borders and beds will also help. Birds love hedges, a hedge made up of plants providing berries and seeds should have regular visitors. The hedge can be trimmed from January to March to whatever manageable height you want, but try to keep an 'A' shaped cross section. Native shrubs that make wonderful bird larders include hawthorn, holly, blackthorn, dogwood, crab apple, elder and hazel. Always insist on locally grown plants of native provenance or even better grow them yourself from seed.

Most feeding stations, should attract blackbirds, blue tits, great tits, wrens, dunnocks and robins. Greenfinches, coal tits, chaffinches are only slightly less likely to turn up. Red letter day visitors could include willow tits, marsh tits, siskins (seen in spring and attracted by red mesh bags!), brambling, blackcap and great spotted woodpecker.

Neil Lister