



ROOTS

Supporter Magazine

The Community Volunteering Charity

Summer 2015

Join in, feel good

IN THIS ISSUE...

Reaching out to support men's health

Busy Londoners volunteer locally

Super heroes help our fundraising efforts



www.tcv.org.uk

Making friends and winning competitions

It was a day to remember for the team in Northern Ireland in May as not only did we take the Best Interpretation of Theme award at the Garden show, we also met a gardening hero!



Monty Don, television presenter of Gardeners' World fame, was the celebrity guest at Garden Show Ireland on Saturday 9 May and while he was offering advice and admiring the competition entrants, he stopped by for a chat with TCV's Ivan Black. Monty was impressed with the garden that Ivan and his team had created; even going as far as saying they'd got the theme "100%". Using recycled materials, they assembled a 3m x 3m square garden, displaying brightly coloured pencils to match this year's competition theme of 'A Colourful Garden'. Apart from beautifully coloured fresh flowers, what could be more appropriate than colouring pencils?

Garden Show Ireland is held every year and is a three day festival of flowers, food and fun!

This year it was held at Antrim Castle Gardens and we had a fantastic time showcasing our gardening skills whilst highlighting the benefits of gardening to the public.



Inside this issue

- 2.....When TCV met Monty Don
- 3.....Welcome to Roots
- 4.....Comic customers help TCV grow
- 5.....Supporting mens health in Leeds
- 6.....Community News
- 9.....Helping Kids Grow
- 10.....News update
- 12.....Employment and Training Services
- 14.....Appeal
- 15.....Tree life centre



Join in, feel good

Inside this issue of Roots, you'll find lots of inspiring stories that highlight what we strive to do every day: create healthier, happier communities for everyone.

Each article highlights how we have adapted our work to reflect the changing needs of communities in the UK. We support them to conserve vital outdoor spaces and in doing so improve their health and wellbeing, or bring people together to promote social cohesion, combat loneliness or enhance employment prospects.

If you'd like to find out more about the projects or activities features in this magazine - please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

And finally I'd like to say a huge thank-you - whether you volunteer with us or help fund our work - you are helping to make a real difference in communities across the UK and we are always grateful for your support.

Julie Hopes - Chief Executive
The Conservation Volunteers

As a charity, your support means everything to us. Without it, we simply cannot continue our work throughout the UK.

SEE PAGE 14 FOR
MORE DETAILS
ON HOW TO
DONATE

**THANK
YOU!**

Comic customers help TCV bag the cash



TCV's tireless battle against alien invaders has received a boost from fans of sci-fi comics, graphic novels, action figures and all things superhero.

£245 has been donated by Forbidden Planet International (FPI) and its customers to buy new tools for TCV's own Green Heroes to help combat invasive non-native species from far, far away, such as *Rhododendron ponticum* and Himalayan balsam, which out-compete our native wildflowers and plants.

The donation has been made by FPI's busy outlet in Glasgow as part of the recently introduced Bag Levy scheme, which aims to reduce the number of plastic bags littering our landscape and harming our wildlife. For each single-use bag given to customers all retailers must levy a minimum charge of five pence, with the proceeds going to good causes. The Levy has already been a huge success with millions fewer bags now being used and discarded. But there are still occasions when people will request a bag for their

purchases, such as on a wet and windy day in Glasgow - it happens!

James Hamilton, Retail Director of Forbidden Planet International, said: "I was unaware of TCV until my wife Anna got involved with the organisation and I'm constantly impressed by the broad range of work it undertakes and how positive and worthwhile the charity is."

Callum Sinclair, TCV Scotland Operations Director, added: "We're delighted to receive FPI's support, which will help buy tools for our local volunteers to tackle some of the 'bad guys'. What really strikes me is that this donation was generated by a single store, so I'd urge other retailers to follow suit and support TCV and our fantastic work. And, to adapt a famous phrase - May the force be with us!"

Reaching out to support men's health



TCV Hollybush has been funded by Leeds Public Health to undertake a city-wide initiative to engage men with mental health problems in the city.

Working with 4 other key partners, the team at Hollybush is reaching out to socially isolated men in some of the most deprived communities in Leeds. We've been taking our work to them, doing projects with local groups in local green spaces, such as path clearing with the Space2 team at Wykebeck Valley (pictured).

Jim*, 45, lives in Armley, Leeds. He lives alone and suffers from depression. This is what he had to say about his time with us:

"I really enjoy coming to Hollybush and doing the gardening and woodworking. I feel more confident and can meet new people and do different things. My mood is better for it and makes it easier being on my own."

We hope to help more people like Jim feel more confident and optimistic about their future.

**Name changed for confidentiality reasons*



Grant success for the Cirencester Green Gym

Rob Williams,
Project Officer

from Gloucestershire, came back from his holidays to a nice surprise! He heard the news that the Macfarlane Walker Trust has awarded TCV a grant of £1,910 to support our work in running the popular Cirencester Green Gym. The grant will ensure that the group is fully funded for

the remainder of this financial year and also put funds towards purchasing trees to improve the hospital grounds.

Rob said: "The grant will be really useful to build on a Green Gym that's going from strength to strength. We are now regularly getting volunteer teams of 15+ and new volunteers are joining all the time."

Steve fulfils his 60 tree pledge

The Conservation Volunteers Wild Crew joined forces with Poulton Wood Rangers to plant 150 trees at Poulton Wood Local Nature Reserve, a 28 acre bluebell woodland on the edge of Aldington.



Volunteer, Steve Bishop, was delighted to be able to fulfil a pledge to plant 60 trees for his 60th Birthday!

“I wanted to mark my 60 years by putting energy into something positive that will be in this world for years to come. When I heard about the Kent Heritage Trees Project planting tasks I jumped at the chance and have fulfilled my wish.”

The woods are open to the public and The Rangers are involved in managing the woods by coppicing the trees and using the wood to create bespoke handmade signs to sell to the public.

Jadie Baker, Kent Heritage Trees Project Officer said: “It has been a joy to work with the Poulton Wood Rangers. It is wonderful to have somewhere you feel you can go and sit for a picnic or some quiet time.”

The planting is part of The Kent Heritage Trees Project funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund, which has planted over 27,000 trees in Kent over the last 4 years.

Hollybush Woodworkers go online



It's an exciting time for the wood workshop at TCV Hollybush in Leeds as we've just launched our Etsy store. We sell all the fantastic products made by our learners and volunteers in the workshop, which make great gift items - from garden

benches to homeware, and from the functional to the purely decorative.

As a social enterprise, we're passionate about helping the local community. Our learners and volunteers include adults with learning disabilities and those who just need some skills and self confidence after a redundancy or illness. Woodworking is a great skill for life - many of our students have gone on to pass their skills to others or become volunteers in the workshop.

You can find us on Etsy:

<http://etsy.me/1MHvnpu>

We also sell on the TCV online shop:

<http://bit.ly/1GJRYBM>

Leaving a Big Tree Plant legacy

The Big Tree Plant, which has been funded by DEFRA and the Forestry Commission, supports the planting of trees in areas where local people will benefit from them. This is The Big Tree Plant's last year and the children of Marham Junior School wanted to plant the trees in the school grounds to create 'a tunnel feature' where children can play in future years.

TCV Norwich was more than happy to help. Many of the 150 children had never planted a tree before, so there was great excitement among them.

We taught them about the trees that they were planting: native tree species that support a wide diversity of wildlife. Oaks, for example, can support about 240 species of butterflies and moths.

Trees also improve air quality by filtering dust from the atmosphere and reducing pollutants such as carbon dioxide. Since they need carbon dioxide to grow, they help to reduce the amount of this gas in our atmosphere, slowing down the rate of change caused by its warming effect.



Coppicing: from Neolithic times to modern chicken farming

TCV Norwich has been working on an organic farm in Norfolk over the winter, coppicing hazel, which will be used as fuel to heat the sheds of free range chickens.

Coppicing – the practice of harvesting broadleaved trees by periodic cutting and gathering of the stems - began as early as the Neolithic period. Coppicing was the most widespread method of woodland management until the 19th century; this means that ancient coppice woodlands are likely to be biologically closest to our original forests.

The decline of coppicing was due to a variety of reasons including the need for larger timber for shipbuilding, an increase in imports of trees from virgin forests overseas, and the growing reliance on coal for fuel, which diminished the need for firewood to make charcoal. A general decline of agriculture also meant that the hazel used for hurdles and other farm products were no longer in such demand.

But the organic Norfolk farm that we're working with has a need for hazel and has a plan to protect the new shoots from being eaten by roaming deer. The hazel woods will be coppiced on rotation each winter to provide a regular supply of wood, and the remaining stools will be covered with brush wigwams for protection.



A meeting of minds at Sheffield allotment

In May, Grow Your Mind, our Sheffield Wednesday Allotment Group, met our midweek Conservationers at an Open Day designed to encourage new volunteers.

The Grow Your Mind group is dedicated to helping volunteers become healthier both physically and mentally by working on the allotment and growing fruit, veg, salad and herbs that they can take home.

On the open day, there was plenty of food, drink, plants, jams and preserves to buy. A poly-tunnel held hanging baskets for people to purchase, and volunteers created a mosaic, built bug hotels, pricked out seedlings and sowed seeds.

Project officer, Sarah Emberson, said: "It was a fantastic day, and lovely to see volunteers mixing together and having fun helping each other. A huge thanks to all the volunteers for coming out and supporting the project."

To volunteer on the project call Sarah Emberson on 07740 899 583 or e-mail s.emberson@tcv.org.uk

Natural Networks triumph at Chelsea

Holly Egleton, Natural Networks Trainee in Birmingham, recently spent a week working with our partners at Birmingham City Council building their Garden at the 2015 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. We all waited with anticipation for the medal awards to be announced and it is great to hear that the Birmingham City Council Exhibit once again achieved a Gold Medal.

As part of her traineeship, Holly spent a week on the build, working alongside staff from the City Council Nurseries, the woodland management team, and designer of the garden, the city's Head of Parks, Darren Share. The design of the garden commemorated the 300th anniversary of Birmingham Cathedral, and included bells, pews, stained glass, a bible and many other features all with floral components. Whilst she was there, Holly spent her time doing many varied tasks, including watering, making labels, painting, arranging plants and in her words "generally watching in awe as the whole thing came together."

All of the experience that Holly gained in what was a pretty unique opportunity will be well used in both the setting up of the Health for Life Edible Patch at Gardener's World Live at the NEC, as well as planning the Health for Life in the community show garden in 2016.

If you've not seen the finished exhibit, then it's certainly worth a look, and as Holly said: "From the moment I walked into the giant marquee, and saw the five metre tall replica of the cathedral's bell tower being lifted into place, I knew I was in for a once in a lifetime experience."



Fun activities for little helpers

Helping Kids Grow

This summer, get the children away from the TV and out into the garden. This simple bug hotel is a perfect habitat for butterflies, bees and ladybirds and the perfect opportunity for them to explore the wildlife and different species living in their garden. It's easy to make and fun for kids of all ages!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Small plastic bottle, scissors, string, garden canes, hacksaw.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR KIDS

1. Ask an adult to cut the top and bottom off your plastic bottle so you have a nice tube shape.
2. Ask an adult to cut the canes, long enough so they just fit inside your bottle. You don't want them hanging out at the ends.
3. Put the canes into your bottle. Make sure you pack them in well so they don't fall out.
4. Tie some string around the bottle so you can hang it up.
5. Hang the bottle outside in a tree or on a fence, in the shade is best.

6. You could try putting other things into the bottle, like sticks or rolled up cardboard, and see if you get different beasties visiting your bug hotel.



For more ideas of things to do with little ones, log onto our gardening club at www.tcv.org.uk/helpingkidsgrow

Let them eat cake!

One of the tasks for Zurich Mutual's (ZM) Colleagues Month, where teams compete in a number of events over 4 weeks, was to bake a cake to reflect a ZM customer. As a partner of ours, TCV was chosen by the Property Claims team and they were crowned the overall winners for their stand out performances across the whole month. The TCV cake was certainly part of the winning team's success - we're sure you'd agree that it looks delicious!



150 bags of litter pulled from the Stour

After such a successful river clean in April where 70 bin bags were filled with litter from the river Stour, volunteers headed back for more.

The 15 volunteers joined forces with Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership and cleared a whopping 80 bags worth! The windy cold weather didn't put anyone off and they were even joined by some new faces. The strangest finds of the day were a leather sofa, a children's slide and children's peddle car along with the usual masses of footballs.

Jadie Baker, Kent Heritage Trees Project Officer said: "Litter in the waterways poses a threat not only to local wildlife and marine life - it is estimated that at least 100,000 mammals and birds die from ingesting plastic bags each year. Thanks to the volunteers there will be 150 fewer bags of rubbish swirling around in the ocean."



A new hotel. . . just for bugs!

Volunteers created a super bug hotel at Singleton Environmental Centre on their Tuesday Wild crew task day.



The prefabricated pent-house was pulled into position next to the plastic bottle greenhouse and the room furnishing got under way. Instead of four-poster beds, insects prefer more humble hollow stems to cosy-up in. Some bugs, such as beetles, prefer to dine in on the rotting wood and bees dine out on pollen from the nearby wildflowers and runner beans on the allotment.

It is hoped that insects will take up residence and carry out essential work of pollinating the crops to make yummy lunches for the volunteers.

Jadie Baker, Project Officer, said: "Luckily for us humans, insects like bees go about their daily lives seeking out food, which is the very thing that keeps our kitchen cupboards full of food. Thanks to the efforts of the volunteers we can continue to improve sites here for wildlife."

The Kent Heritage Trees Project is a 5 year heritage lottery funded project based at Singleton Environment Centre. The Wild Crew volunteers meet every Tuesday and work to improve the Singleton Environment Centre site and sites further afield in Kent.

To find out more about our events or how you can get involved, visit www.tcv.org.uk/kentheritagetrees or contact the Kent Heritage Trees team on 01233 666519 or singleton@tcv.org.uk

Singleton's students get stuck in!

Singleton Environment Centre recently hosted two work experience students from the nearby John Wallis Academy.

The students from Year 10 got to see the varied life of the project officers at Singleton; growing vegetables, clearing the riverbank of rubbish and surveying heritage trees. By carrying out new tasks with new people in an unfamiliar environment, they learned fresh strategies and skills.

One student, Heidi, said: "As well as learning about wildlife and life in an office, I learnt that I'm able to deal with situations that I may have struggled with before"

The Kent Heritage Trees Project at Singleton has developed close links with the school and is always top of the list for work experience students, many of whom have visited Singleton during Pond

Dipping Sessions with school or brownies.

The Wild Crew team - Singleton's work experience project - has proved to be really successful in getting people into work and training.

Jadie Baker, Kent Heritage Trees Project Officer said: "Coming out on task days gives people an enormous sense of achievement and the confidence to try new things. These are essential ingredients during the isolating task of looking for a job."



London mayor offers 'speed volunteering' opportunity for busy Londoners

We have joined forces with the Mayor's Team London to provide Londoners with a 'speed volunteering' scheme, encouraging them to try volunteering for the first time.

According to an independent survey, 60% of potential volunteers are deterred from volunteering because they feel they do not have sufficient time due to work commitments. This initiative will allow people to sign up for short, sharp bursts of activity, which fit around their demanding schedules, whilst making a real difference to their local communities. TCV opportunities will enable volunteers to improve local outdoor spaces whilst getting active and reaping benefits to their health in the process. The scheme is the latest development in the Mayor's Team

London volunteering programme, which has seen almost 62,000 Londoners help out across the capital in the last two years.

TCV are running five programmes across all parts of London where volunteers will get involved in activities such as hedge-laying, tree planting and path creation. The Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: "We know more Londoners want to get involved, but often find it challenging to fit volunteering into their hectic lives. This scheme is designed to encourage everyone to give volunteering a go but with added flexibility. I urge Londoners to see how speed volunteering might work for them." More information can be found by visiting www.speedvolunteer.london.gov.uk

TCV and Poundworld help 21 people out of unemployment

TCV and the Ingeus National Account Team have filled almost all of the new vacancies for the recently opened Poundworld store in Barrow-in-Furness with Work Programme Customers.



The customers have now started work following a process that took them through employment workshops, mock interviews, and a work trial to gain valuable experience in team work and the retail environment. They've taken

pride in merchandising the brand new store and feedback that the work TCV did with them beforehand was a great support mechanism for their journey into employment.

Many of the customers said they wouldn't have got the job without our help. For instance, one customer said: "I have gone from shaking with nerves when attending appointments to actually smiling and now I have a job."

Our work with the newly employed customers doesn't stop here - we will ensure they adapt to working life and offer support through monthly calls.

Overall, our aim is to leave our customers as happy employees.

Hard work pays off for Briony!

Briony had been in and out of employment, so our first aim was to rebuild her confidence. This started with encouraging her to take a week long job as a steward at her local racecourse.

The races had a hugely positive effect on Briony. After her first day we were already hearing how well she was doing.

Briony went on to secure a role as a traffic enforcement officer, which she was very excited about and couldn't wait to start. She felt her success was due to her increased confidence as well as the hard work and effort both TCV and herself put into her job



Jobs pledged by leading employers at TCV job fair

Unemployed people, employers and recruitment agencies brought together at Cheltenham jobs fair.

Laurence Robertson MP opened the fair commenting that it was great to see such a strong initiative with a great turn out from across the Gloucestershire area.

Linda Hudson, Programmes Manager for TCV, commented: "We are thrilled to see so many of our customers being given the opportunity to access local employers on a face to face basis. There are over 500 jobs on offer here today and we have had well over 100 people through the door."

Army Careers and Royal Air Force Careers both pledged over 200 vacancies each across all types of roles. The other job opportunities came from a diverse range of employers including Glevum Security, The Utility Warehouse, Domino's Pizza, Cleeve Care Group and GKR Self Defence.

Sam Myers of Cordant People, said: "We have been really impressed with the calibre of the people we have met today and I'm sure we will find work for many of them during the coming weeks."

The event was not restricted to current job seekers as Linda explained: "Many long term unemployed face real and significant health or social barriers to returning to the workplace. Learndirect is here to offer free training courses, Prince's Trust supports young people in overcoming obstacles and Barnwood Trust provides fabulous grants to help people with mental health issues return to work. Several of our customers have said to me that today has really opened their eyes to the range of support that we can provide."



TCV also placed 40 people into jobs working at the Cheltenham Festival itself. Employer account manager at TCV, Robert Watkins said: "It was a great opportunity for them to get some money in their pockets, get out in the fresh air and have a real feeling of pride."

Michael McHale aged 58 from Whaddon, who was working as a steward at the festival, was unemployed for 12 years. He said: "I've got two young children and TCV really helped me out by getting me this job at the racecourse. I couldn't see any way of getting back to work with two young children and they showed me that there are ways. If you feel trapped they will find a way out for you."





#LoveYourCommunity

We're calling our summer appeal 'Love Your Community' because that's precisely what it's all about. The Belfast story shows how your £10 gift can help us to care for the people and places in our society that frequently 'fall through the cracks'.

It doesn't take long for a once-loved open space to become neglected, overgrown, in the worst cases, a magnet for vandalism, crime and anti-social behaviour.

But the good news is this...

With your gift we can really do something about it.

This was the situation facing the Donegall Pass community in Belfast and sadly, this kind of scenario is becoming more common all over the UK.

Over the last 15 years, the area had suffered serious levels of decline. The community has experienced unemployment, withdrawal of

businesses, neglect, anti-social behaviour, increased crime rates, health inequalities and social isolation.

By, working in close partnership with local volunteers, the TCV Community Action Team has transformed Donegall Pass into a beautiful, fully accessible community garden where people can grow fruit and vegetables, children can play or people can just meet for a chat.

The Donegall Pass Community Garden is a perfect example of how your gift can help to transform local communities back into vibrant, friendly places for everyone to enjoy.

"I'm in my fifth year here and I didn't really know anybody. But since getting involved with the TCV community garden I've met lots of people...I feel part of things now."

Maz, Donegall Pass, Belfast

So, please if you can, send a gift today

Cheques made payable to The Conservation Volunteers and post to:

Love Your Community Appeal, The Conservation Volunteers

Sedum House, Mallard Way, Doncaster , DN4 8DB

If you'd rather give online, go to www.tcv.org.uk/getinvolved/donate

or telephone in confidence with your debit/credit card on **01302 388883**.

Rest assured that every penny you give to our Love Your Community appeal today will make sure that TCV can help communities all over Britain to create and restore safe and accessible outdoor places and, ultimately, build healthier, happier communities.

£100

will keep us dry by funding 10 waterproofs so we can work in any weather

£50

could protect our volunteers' hands by providing 15 pairs of protective gloves

£25

can buy loppers and wheelbarrows

£10

can buy much-needed trowels and spades

Tree Life Centre Update

- The Tree Life Centre re-development is coming along fast! We have completed the tree trail path and we're now in the process of planting up and developing the area so that when walkers are on the trail, they'll discover a beautiful mixture of habitats, woodland, hedgerow, wildflower meadow, orchard and wetland.
- We are also in the throes of completing our new shelter in the green wood working area to host the first workshop on the site. Bookings are already filling up fast for this fun and creative workshop, so get in touch if you'd like to join.
- The Tree Life Centre would like to give a warm welcome to Philip Taylor, our new Natural Networks trainee. Philip will be spending the next few weeks with us before he heads to South Gloucestershire Council, where he will be spending most of his contracted year working with local community groups. We hope that this will bring a stronger working relationship between the local Council community groups and TCV.
- Congratulations to Becca, Volunteer Officer at the Tree Life Centre, for stepping up to the challenge, completing her MIDAS training, and taking on the leadership of the Thursday and Friday tasks days.



400 trees planted in memory of volunteer

TCV planted 400 trees in Longley Park, Sheffield in memory of loyal volunteer Malcolm Cottam who sadly passed away last summer when he was knocked off his bicycle.

Nineteen people turned up to help plant the trees, including friends and family, colleagues from his days as a teacher at City School, people who volunteered with him at Unstone Grange, Sheffield Rangers, friends from a Stained Glass Workshop, and TCV volunteers. Malcolm was well known and respected by many people and groups throughout the city. He volunteered at many places, produced a variety of art work including portraits of people he worked with, and enjoyed archery, cycling, gardening and baking.

The site for the trees was provided by Sheffield City Council and they will form a larger wooded area made up of small areas of trees planted by various community groups. Sheffield City Council will maintain the trees for one year. We planted oak, blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel and wild cherry.

Malcolm's sister and her husband, Irene and Simon Webster, were interviewed by Radio Sheffield during the tree plant. Simon praised the work of TCV, which Malcolm was very dedicated to, and they kindly gave a donation to TCV. You can listen to the interview here <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02jpk6s> (it's at 1hr 37 - 1 hr 44)



Enjoyed this copy of Roots?

Share the love – pass it on to friends and family...



SMS text Giving

As a charity, The Conservation Volunteers receive no core Government funding for our vital work with people and spaces, so we rely almost entirely upon the generosity of our donors. To donate £3 by SMS, text TCV to 70444 or scan the QRcode with your smart phone. Text Costs £3.00 plus network charge. The Conservation Volunteers receives 100% of your donation. Obtain bill payer's permission. Alternatively you can make a donation through our website www.tcv.org.uk/donate



Organise your own event

Need an injection of fun this summer? Why not hold your own fundraising event this year? Our fundraising packs have all the ideas and practical tools you need to hold your very own tailor-made event, so order one now! Not sure what to do? From Great Green Adventures to Wild Warriors or for the less energetic - the Great Green Quiz, we've got something for everyone, so visit our website, download your packs and put some fun into your fundraising this autumn with TCV!

www.tcv.org.uk/getinvolved



Thank you!



Find us on



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Thank you so much for your support, we hope you will continue to support us throughout 2015!

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