

MADYSS Matters

July 2020 No.170

Birthday Greetings

Just a very few July birthdays to mention!

Geoff Blamire	Alan Stansfield
Thelma Farrell	Barbara Stansfield
Adele Harman	Kath Wilkinson
LeeAnne Higginson	Chris Willett
Susan Lakin	Tina Yearsley
George Oliver	

Here's hoping that you all have a Happy Birthday and that you are able to celebrate in some way or another, despite current restrictions.

Virtual MADYSS Meetings

As it is going to be many months before we can have social events or the monthly meeting, one proposal is that the group gets together virtually using Zoom. To participate, members would need to have access to a computer, tablet or smart phone. If you may be interested in pursuing this suggestion, please contact Ike on 01260 273969 or email him, ike3869@gmail.com. The meetings could take place weekly, every two weeks, or monthly, depending on the level of interest.

Upcycling

by Sue Stephenson

Kath asked me to tell you about my new skill of felting. I sent for supplies from Amazon intending to make a magnificent picture during lockdown, but I have not even picked up my felting needles, just not in the mood!

I have, however, embarked on an upcycling project to make a large plant stand out of an old pallet. I didn't think pallets were so well made, it took me a full day just to deconstruct it!

Along the way I've learnt about removing very long, very rusty nails, pre-drilling (what does a wood drill bit look like as opposed to a masonry one?), and Phillips and Pozi screw heads. For the paint I used a flat matt furniture paint with a chalky

finish, which I had left over from one of my previous projects.



The finished product



Looks even better with plants in situ

It took me quite some time, but I had plenty of that. I wouldn't inspect it too closely, but I am quite proud of my efforts; however, I won't be taking orders anytime soon!

A Day in the Life of . . .

Sheila Blamire

Our COVID-19 days are much the same. We go for a walk in the morning, return and have lunch. Then it's the time for Geoff to fill up the garden bird feeders (which are costing us a small fortune!). Then it is either doing work on the computer or some gardening (lot to do!). Then it's dinner whilst watching the TV, and afterwards either more TV or me working on the computer, while Geoff is either re-watching films or TV programmes, or else he reads a bit. So the walks are the most interesting in our lockdown routine.

We started them before the lockdown to try and get into some shape 'to walk with the pumas' over rough terrain on our trip to Patagonia. However, the lockdown stopped that and hopefully we'll be with them at the beginning of October, COVID willing. The pre-lockdown walks were a little sporadic, only 2-3 times a week, just over 5km, which took about an hour. When lockdown started (March 23rd) the walks became a daily affair so we started to explore the countryside around us, going further afield and for longer walks. The walks are now up to 9km and usually last about three hours (includes birdwatching!).

On one of our standard walks we stopped by a fishing pool and saw a long-tailed tit, a delightful bird and always lovely to see. As we watched it, we suddenly realised there were actually two and they were going to their nest with beakfuls of invertebrates! They had young. So we decided to



go back and, with a huge amount of luck, we might get the timing right and see the young leave the nest. The next day it was blowing a

gale, but the two parents were still going in and out of the nest with food. But on our third trip there was no sight of the adults, but the nest was still intact so hadn't been predated. Obviously they had fledged some time after we'd left them and before our return. We were both sad and pleased: sad that we wouldn't be seeing them and pleased that they had had a successful outcome.

On another of our walks we saw a superb tree creeper. These birds 'creep' up the side of tree trunks and underneath branches searching for invertebrates. This one was going up the side of a tree and then it disappeared behind a



loosened piece of bark, but reappeared very quickly. This was quickly followed by another doing the same, but this time, we saw it was carrying food. We'd found their nest! We watched them for about half an hour and they kept constantly returning to the nest with beakfuls of invertebrates. Again, we hoped to see their young fledge, so we kept on returning to the nest. Each time we watched the pair bringing food to their young. Then, after about 17-18 days we arrived and waited, but no birds returned to the nest. As far as we could see, the nest behind the bark was still intact, so we can only assume that again the young birds had fledged successfully, but again we didn't see anything of either the adults or juveniles.

As I said, these walks have become a daily occurrence, rain or shine. They started 90 days ago. We are definitely more fit; hopefully, we will continue and be ready for the pumas in October. If we put these walks end to end, as of today 20th June, we'd now be 40 miles north of Inverness - not by the crow flies, by actually walking, ie over 400 miles!!

MADYSS Committee

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