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## *Autumn 2007 at Root & Branch*

This autumn is turning out to be a busy season with lots of new projects underway. We have been given permission by the farmer landlord to use another workshop, which we have started to convert into a larger woodworking workshop. Volunteer Ian Matheson, cabinet-maker, is co-ordinating the transformation of the workshop and expects the work to be completed late autumn. He will then teach gardeners how to make furniture.

After an inspiring visit to the RESTORE fleet meadow ceramics workshops, we have decided to develop our fledgling ceramics projects by purchasing a shed and converting into a ceramics workshop. Volunteer Graham Arrondelle has taken responsibility for co-ordinating the new ceramics project and has started showing clients the basic techniques of working with clay.

As well as these two exciting new development, we have also been awarded an Awards for All grant to provide greenwood working, wood carving and lathe workshops. Exciting stuff!!

## *At Root & Branch ...*

Hi, I'm Mark— most of you already know me. I've been at Root & Branch for about three months now. I'm the large loud one.

I came to Root & Branch after five years out of work and three years of depression, not leaving the house and staying in my black hole— I chopped the ladder up so I couldn't climb out and no-one could climb down to help me.

Since I started at Root & Branch all that has changed. I've had counselling, new medication and I've discovered a new passion in my life— gardening. Root & Branch has given me a new lease of life, & I'm starting a horticultural course in September.

With the Support of Root & Branch, my wife and five kids and my medical team I feel I now have a future. May our gods bless Root & Branch!



**Mark with a tray of Rainbow  
Chard in the Westmill  
Farmyard**

## *Root & Branch Appoints an Activities Co-ordinator!*



I joined Root and Branch (R&B) in mid April of this year and can say that no two days have ever been the same!

I live in Highworth and I've been working as a self employed jobbing gardener in the Coleshill area for 14 years, combining that with varied P/T work with people with learning difficulties and more recently with an evening job at a large clothing warehouse, which I've since given up (no more knickers).

I'm easing gradually into the role of Activities Co-ordinator, focussing at the moment on the garden. Loads of late seed sowing and preparing ground to plant out all the 'babies'. Just the courgettes, brassicas and sweetcorn to go in. Then the leeks and wallflowers and more salad crops to sow. Soon the sunflowers, cornflowers, cosmos and calendula will start doing their thing giving us and the insects pleasure right up into Autumn, which will be a natural time for me to get more stuck into co-ordinating and facilitating things in the arts and crafts department.

I believe that people, just like plants and all living beings have an innate tendency towards health and well being and hope I'll be able to contribute to making R&B a place where that continues to happen and where we can all flourish. Cathy Turbinskyj

### *Teddy Kolya*

My name is Teddy Kolya. I'm 10½ years old and I joined R&B with Cathy and am really enjoying my role as peripatetic well being practitioner. My hobbies are hares, cheese, sleeping and having my ears rubbed and I love it at R&B because of all the friendly people and there's always new visitors to announce.

## *Creative Activities*

We joined Root and Branch in the middle of March and have since been involved with the many creative activities on offer. These have included painting and decorating vegetable labels for the garden, decorating pots using mosaic tiles and making aromatherapy products i.e.: bath bags and wheat bags. We have also had a go at patchwork using the sewing machine.

Since joining Root and Branch we have enjoyed making new friends and find the staff and volunteers really friendly and helpful. Also having the communal lunch on a Wednesday enables everybody to get to know each other and enjoy a meal cooked by the gardeners.

Being at Root and Branch has helped us to gain confidence and given us the opportunity to try many new things. We would recommend it to anyone thinking of coming here. Claire Morell & Belinda Badger



### *Root & Branch— a poem*

The rhythm of simplicity makes her yield willingly  
Tending her soil, pulling up the past, planting in the present  
New seeds placed with care, attention and much hope  
By hands too many times paralysed by lack of compassion  
Now creating with a sense of purpose and belonging  
Essential for calm mind and easybreathing  
There are no ego's here, just souls joining at the oasis  
That place of otherness that needs no explanation  
Where hunger and thirst can be quenched by kindness  
Coming like a gentle breeze rustling the leaves  
Everything as it is meant to be in each moment that passes  
Blue and green merging splashed with vibrant colour  
Such richness in one small space  
Where space seems infinite, sacred and eternal  
A vibration of love moves through battered spirits  
Ascending from earth, descending from the universe  
Uniting at the core, a ball of golden light  
Illuminating thoughts imprisoned in darkness, unacknowledged  
Where once seen fade with the setting sun  
Each day in this garden brings new understanding  
Of all that the heart yearns for  
The slow steady pulse beating in Divine harmony.

Kim Williams

## *Volunteering at Root & Branch*

I joined Root and Branch earlier this year after a friend of mine, Tracey (also a volunteer), told me what a wonderful place it was and I had to come and find out for myself. I couldn't fail to be impressed by the wonderful therapeutic garden that changes every week. How fantastic it is to walk out in the garden and pick a bowl full of broad beans planted and nurtured here and then create a wonderful communal lunch for everyone to share.

I am a complementary therapist and so really value the importance of somewhere like Root and Branch. My background in mental health issues is probably quite superficial in comparison to many. Although, my father has Parkinson's disease with a psychosis, his wife has schizophrenia, my son has OCD and a good family friend suffered with Alzheimer's and through my clients I help them with various levels of depression and anxiety. I guess this has made me a good listener and I'm very open minded.

Root and Branch has a relaxed, laid-back atmosphere enabling you to experience new activities whilst encouraging self confidence and building self-esteem. I only manage to attend one morning a week but during that time so far I have met some lovely people and I enjoy listening to the laughter and friendships growing among various groups either gardening, cooking or craft making. Also during this short time I have watched people's self-reliance grow and grow.

I enjoy coming each week and only wish I had time to get more involved. Can I now just quickly say thank you to everyone I have met here for giving me the chance to take time out and look at life from a different perspective. Jennie Gordon

## *Arts & Crafts*

For 4 weeks we were lucky enough to have Helen Jacobs come to Root & Branch. With Helen we experimented with quite a few different activities. My personal favourite was the paper-making workshop where we got very messy but created many lovely pieces of decorative paper

We also had Yvonne teach us the art of decoupage. This involves decorating anything from a bin to an old table with designs that you've cut out and then vanishing it. This produces an attractive finish and is great fun. For a few weeks I got to grips with the various techniques of knitting. It was a hard slog to begin with but progress was made and it turned out to be very relaxing and when a new technique was mastered I really felt a great sense achievement. Beka Cavanagh

## *Summer Fête A Success-Despite The Floods!*



We were blessed with sunny, dry weather for our summer fête which made for a relaxed and enjoyable day. Although many roads were impassable due to flooding, a courageous number of people did manage to get through to us.

The garden was in pristine condition, with many plants in flower; it was also decked out with bunting and dotted with stalls and seating. Music and storytelling provided a welcome distraction and added to the laid-back atmosphere. We were extremely fortunate that people were willing to give up their time to provide interesting talks on bats, falconry, bee-keeping, blacksmithing and bio-diesel, for which we thank them immensely. Delicious home-made cakes and refreshing beverages helped lubricate the afternoon.

Thanks to the auction, plant sale, bric-a-brac and quizzes, we raised nearly £1,200 towards continuing the work of Root & Branch. Our thanks go out to everyone who helped prepare for the event and who helped on the day, and to everyone who attended.





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**Many Thanks In This  
Issue To:**

- Mr Duffield £1000 Donation
- Drayton Parish Council £50 Grant for Lathe & Computer
- Grove Parish Council £100 for Lathe & Computer
- Kennington Parish Council £75 for Lathe & Computer
- Uffington Parish Council £25 for Lathe & Computer
- Cumnor Parish Council £100 for Lathe & Computer
- Watchfield Parish Council £50 for Lathe & Computer
- Shelvingford Parish Council £25 for Lathe & Computer
- Shrivenham Parish Council £50 for Lathe & Computer
- Shrivenham Fête Committee £50 Donation
- Mary Webb Trust £300 Donation
- Mr Boyd-Carpenter £100 Donations
- Shrivenham Defence Academy £250 Donation
- Highworth 'Jazz on the Lawn' Event £300 Donation

**We are funded by many organisations, including:**

- *Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust*
- *Oxfordshire County Council*
- *Woodward Charitable Trust*
- *Zurich Community Trust*
- *Awards for All*
- *Oxfordshire Community Foundation*
- *Vale of White Horse District Council*
- *.....and many smaller but equally valued donors (see below)*

**Become a Volunteer with Root & Branch**

Are you looking to do something interesting,  
challenging and rewarding ?  
Then become a Volunteer for Root & Branch!  
We can offer you the chance to get involved in  
administration, fundraising, gardening,  
crafts, as a trustee etc. with a friendly  
and supportive organisation.

Call **01793 780380** for more information!

**Future Plans and Events:**

Visit to Westonbirt Festival of Wood August 2007

Another visit to RESTORE fleet meadow project.

Zurich Business Challenge

Creation of new woodworking workshop

Erection of new Pottery workshops and regular pottery classes

Plan for recruitment of new member of staff 'Healthy Eating Co-ordinator'.



**Daniel in front of the  
Forge**