

A Matter of Perspective

From its rather grand name I was expecting something bigger. I had visions in my mind of the extensive fields around Evesham, even now displaying drifts of blossom, a promise of fruitful bounty later in the year. So what I found was a surprise; but certainly not a disappointment. Essentially, I had adult expectations whereas the Carlton Diamond Jubilee Orchard was designed and created with toddlers in mind. And for them it must be magical.

Tucked behind the "new" houses on the corner of Barton Road and Nailstone Road, a secret path links one with the other helping to avoid possibly dangerous traffic. It wiggles along, ensuring walkers take their time, pause to take in all that is on offer, look at the different shrubs and plants, peer into the bug hotel, listen to the birdsong. The hedgerow is native ash, dotted with crab apple, lime and sessile oak trees. To attract a wider variety of birds, specimen dogwood, hazel, holly and guelder rose have also been planted which inevitably attracts a multitude of wildlife. Butterflies and bees abound; bugs scuttle about; and birds happily build nests. If you are lucky, you may even discover a sheltering toad or lizard in one of the reptile and amphibian refuges.

Frequent visitors, no matter how young, cannot help but be aware of the changing seasons. Imagine turning up one day to find the first snowdrops of the year! Soon the sharp sticks in the hedge turn somehow softer with their bright green buds. All around the grass sprouts mounds of primroses, violets, then bluebells, and believe it or not, the wildflower meadow turns pink in May and then white in June!

Above all this magical, knee-high delight, you can look up to find the trees heavy with blossom and fragrance. Imagine being caught in a shower of petals on a blustery, spring day! How exciting to chase the tumbling leaves in autumn! How many different fruits

can you find? Can you name? Can you draw? Can you try? You will be surprised how many in such a small area. Various trees provide apples, pears, plums, greengage, damson, cherries, and then there are the bushes of currants and berries! It is amazing! It is now ten years since the Carlton Gardening Club was formed to create and manage this small area of land on the edge of the village and they must be thrilled with the results of their hard work. From the start it was intended for the benefit and enjoyment of the public and with the hope that others would get involved. Hopefully the youngsters who get to know and love this place will be interested enough to develop their involvement with nature study and the protection of wildlife.

For the time being, it is enough that they are observing, maybe collecting a few treasures, like leaves and feathers to keep safe or for use in stories or songs, pictures or poems. Complete with picnic table and swings and slide, it is the ideal place for meeting and making friends so I know that, after an exciting day out, everyone will come back home with a whole lot of precious memories at the very least.

Val Cheshire



Gardeners refurbishing the ground in the play area



Aspect 21