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A goodbye to Marieke as she moves on to her new home in Cirencester

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It seems that farmers in this area are getting rid of the nettles, are butterflies in decline too?

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A beautiful picture of a grasshopper snapped by Claire Harbour. Put a face to the sound..

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On a beautiful day while out walking we spotted a slow worm, lying in the grass sun bathing

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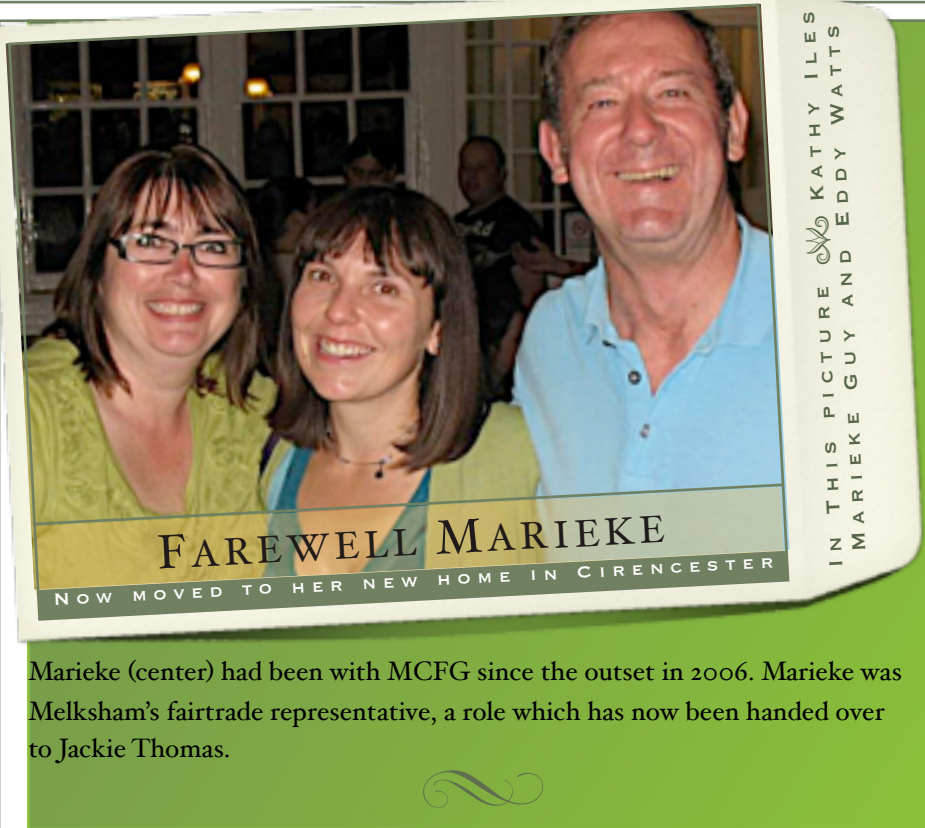
#### Wildlife garden pictures

A few picture updates of how the wildlife garden looks this month

#### Smoothie of the month



This month's top smoothie recipe. Be sure to use fresh organic fairtrade ingredients as this is good for you, the growers and the planet.



## FAREWELL MARIEKE

NOW MOVED TO HER NEW HOME IN CIRENCESTER

IN THIS PICTURE  
KATHY ILES  
MARIEKE GUY AND EDDY WATTS

Marieke (center) had been with MCFG since the outset in 2006. Marieke was Melksham's fairtrade representative, a role which has now been handed over to Jackie Thomas.

## Less butterflies this year?

This year we have noticed that quite a few farmers in our area have been tidying up their land and reclaiming the edges of their fields, which has resulted in the mass removal of stinging nettles.



It seems that the butterfly population have been hit this year. We have spotted far less butterflies compared to previous years and were unable to collect any caterpillars this year.

You may ask "Why do you collect caterpillars?" Well every year we collect larvae and nettles and raise them in safety in a purpose made box to ensure the highest 'hatch rate' possible for each species. This keeps us busy for a number of weeks

searching for the highest quality to feed the growing caterpillars. It's very exciting watching these guys turn from humble larvae to beautiful butterflies and setting them free.

Crucially we would collect and raise these larvae from young hatchlings to prevent parasitic infestation. Early collection of these tiny caterpillars drastically reduces the number of parasite infected larvae and of course insures a massive hatch rate for these beautiful butterflies.

Has anyone else noticed that there were less Tortoise Shells, Painted Ladies and Peacock butterflies this year? If anyone wants details of how we build our caterpillar / butterfly house just let me know!

## Wildlife on an August evening

**O**n our trip to and from the August climate friendly meeting, we spotted some cool wildlife.

Shortly after we left home, we saw a sparrow hawk sitting on a roadside post on a country lane. This beautiful bird was sat on the post watching us approach while sitting motionless. He allowed us to stop opposite him to enjoy a good look, and he was stunning with his beautiful yellow eyes and fabulous feathers. After a minute or two he got bored with us and took flight



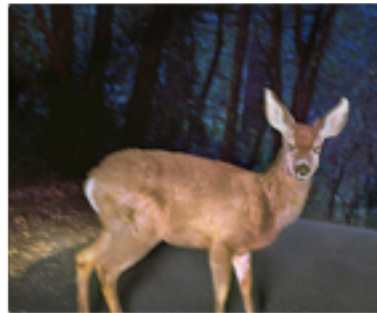
After the meeting, on our way home we turned down the winding road again, driving along slowly we saw in the lights a tawny owl who was just



sitting watching us approach near the grass verge at the side of the road. As we approached he turned his head to look full on at us, his wide eyes glowing. He tucked his wings in and took a couple of cautious steps, he then flew off towards some trees.



We started off again, further down the road only to find a beautiful doe



crossing the road to another field, we waited for her to reach the other side of the road and disappear through the hedgerow again just a couple of yards ahead.



Finally we saw a big ol' rabbit hopping down the road causing us to stop again. Watching his little white tail bouncing every time he hopped was quite amusing. We followed him as he zig zagged along the road, trying to find a gap in the hedge. We thought that it was great to see one of these animals, but seeing four on the same day as our climate friendly meeting was like a cool coincidence.

## Up close... Anyone for cricket?

Actually he is a grasshopper, cute isn't he? I snapped this gorgeous meadow grasshopper while out for a walk in the field.

My sister and I used to run about trying to catch these springy little critters when we were younger. Something that always reminds me of summer is the warm days and the sound of crickets and grasshoppers chirping. It's amazing to see one of these so close up and put a 'face' to the distinctive sound.



© Claire Harbour

## A good year for fruit and nut!

A good year for collecting wild produce. The trees and bushes in the fields and hedgerows are laden with an abundance of delightful fruit and nuts this year.

As you may have guessed we like to make our own produce such as apple pies, jams and such from locally sourced wild items whenever possible. Next project due up any



*Collecting blackberries*



minute now is apple and blackberry pies, yum yum! Our latest batch of jam was made using the fruit off our plum tree, our neighbours also made some jam using their damson plums, each of us with great results! There are a lot of native fruit and nut trees that seem to be doing very well in our area. While in the field we spotted an abundance of hazelnuts. So we have started to gather some to use shortly.

Hazelnuts are very nice when added into chocolate with a small handful of raisins to make homemade choc-bars (eaten at christmas of course).

Do you make your own produce from fruit? Maybe you make your own cider? If anyone wants to send in their proven top recipe for a particular jam please do! Tell us about it for the next newsletter!

## Please Contribute!

If you have any Melksham related news, wildlife pictures or great recipes that use local organic fare trade ingredients and wish to share them we would love your contribution towards the next newsletter.

Send any pictures, recipes, stories or news to me for inclusion before the end of the month (ideally at least a week before the end of the month) to either of the following emails:

[melkshamcfcg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:melkshamcfcg@yahoo.co.uk)

-or-

[mcfcg@claireharbour.co.uk](mailto:mcfcg@claireharbour.co.uk)

## Hot off the press! Christine pulls...

First parsnip of the season in the Harbour household garden. Blanching & freezing session coming up



## Fabulous Slow Worm Spotted

Out for a stroll on a nice warm day we found our first Slow Worm for some years. So, how do you find a Slow Worm? The easiest way is to look around the periphery of 'undisturbed' fields and keep a special look out for discarded materials such as pieces of tin, cardboard even carpet or such. Slow worms like to bask in the heat to 'charge' themselves up, like all reptiles from the warmth of the sun and by hiding under thin materials such as corrugated iron they can do this in safety. Of course be sure to leave everything as you found it.



*Slow Worm (Lacerta Vivipara)*

# The wildlife garden - A monthly pictorial update



A few pictures of the MCFG wildlife garden as of the 4th of **September** 2011



## And Finally..



“A fruit smoothie is a healthy alternative to chocolate or a candy bar and they taste great”

## Smoothie of the month

### Banana and cinnamon

- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup skimmed milk
- 1 organic fair trade banana
- A splash of vanilla extract
- A dash of cinnamon
- 4 ice cubes

Blend all of the ingredients together until smooth and thick, pour into a tall glass and enjoy this delicious smoothie

