

Welcome



Another action packed quarter as we speed inexorably towards the longest day and plenty to reflect on. Carol and her team's Gold Medal at Chelsea Flower Show, our first 2 Rural Weeks at Bicton College and the extraordinary response to the article in Farmers Weekly – all examples of the human endeavour and enthusiasm which spurs this Charity on as we continue our Mission. Life beyond the military – Outdoors.



Anna Baker Cresswell
Founder and Development Director

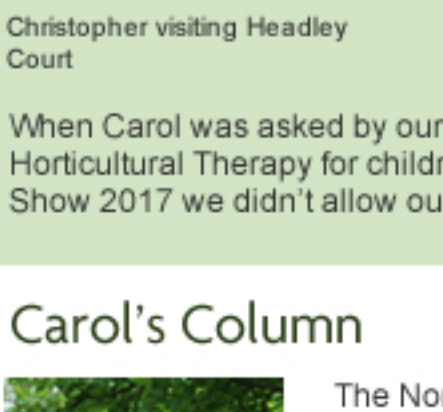
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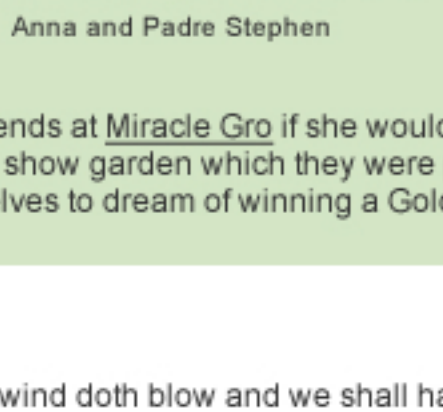
HighGround at Headley Court

We welcomed in our new Chairman to Headley Court, as well as Lucy Pitman from the Walled Kitchen Garden Network and Christopher, who volunteers for us at Horseferry Road.

I was fortunate enough to meet the Padre on one of his visits to Headley Court and it was great to share a brew with him.



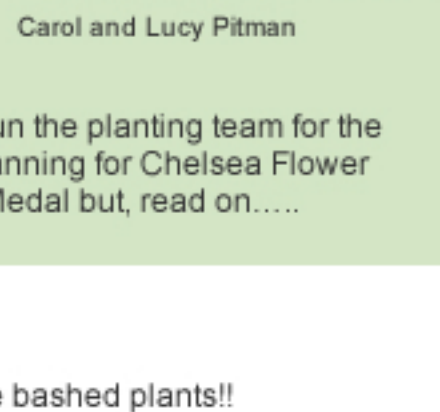
Christopher visiting Headley Court



Anna and Padre Stephen

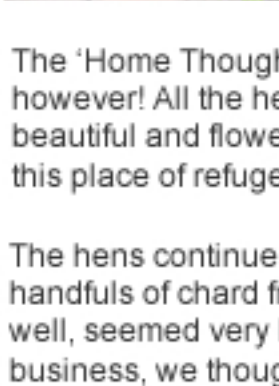


Chairman's visit to Headley Court to meet Carol



Carol and Lucy Pitman

Carol's Column



The North wind doth blow and we shall have bashed plants!!

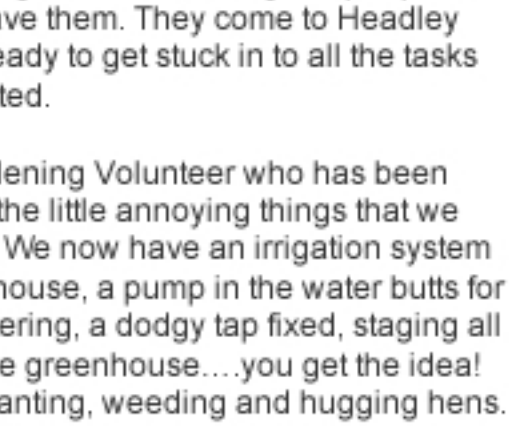
The last few days have been another challenge! Our lovely herbaceous plants have been given a severe beating and soft leaves of our newly planted veggies have been thrashed. The glass in the greenhouse has rattled and the doors on the sheds nearly taken off their hinges. Doesn't Mother Nature know it's June??

The 'Home Thoughts' garden is looking excellent however! All the herbaceous perennials are looking beautiful and flowering so well. It is just a riot of colour in this place of refuge and peace.

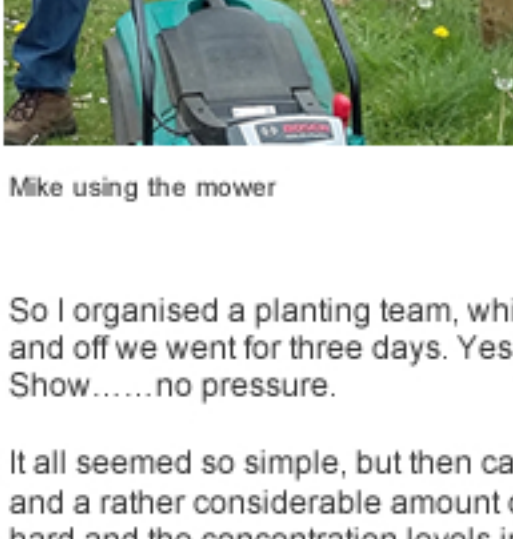
The hens continue to live the life of Riley with regular handfuls of chard from the veg plots. They were laying well, seemed very happy and after all the 'Avian Flu' business, we thought it would be a good idea to let the little cockerel out to be with the ladies. Mistake, they chased him, pecked and bullied him, but he valiantly fought back, so he earned the name of Trooper. So back he went to the Ark chicken house and run. Maybe they just needed a little longer to get to know him we thought. We put our two little bantam girls in with him for company, no problems and the weeks passed. So surely after a respectable amount of time the other hens would accept him. The decision was made and we opened the run, out he came. The hens took no notice for a few minutes, but then Trooper decided he would get in first and picked on Mrs Welsummer and they went beak to beak. Trooper was no match and soon was looking very battered. The only answer was back in 'lock down' with his girls. Shall we try again????



Home Thoughts garden



Carol with 'Trooper'



Mike using the mower

Our band of Gardening Volunteers are great people and we are so lucky to have them. They come to Headley Court rain or shine ready to get stuck in to all the tasks waiting to be completed.

We have a new Gardening Volunteer who has been amazing at fixing all the little annoying things that we keep meaning to do. We now have an irrigation system in our second greenhouse, a pump in the water butts for outside or inside watering, a dodgy tap fixed, staging all neatly arranged in the greenhouse....you get the idea! He is also great at planting, weeding and hugging hens. Just perfect!!

My Very Big News is all about Chelsea Flower Show.

To cut a long story short, last December I answered a query from Miracle-Gro regarding how to plant a Chelsea Flower Show garden. I have completed several medal winning gardens at Chelsea in my former life, so I offered to help. Miracle-Gro are very generous to us supplying all the compost, plant food, gro bags etc by the pallet load without a second thought. This seemed the ideal opportunity to show our appreciation.

So I organised a planting team, which included two patients and Gary who works for The Clink and off we went for three days. Yes, three days to complete planting a garden at Chelsea Flower Show.....no pressure.

It all seemed so simple, but then came the delivery delays. I found myself with about 36 hours left and a rather considerable amount of plants to get into the compost. Everyone worked extremely hard and the concentration levels increased, all fell silent. Yours truly was on her hands and knees planting, becoming so tired, I was incapable of speech (which some people consider a bonus!).

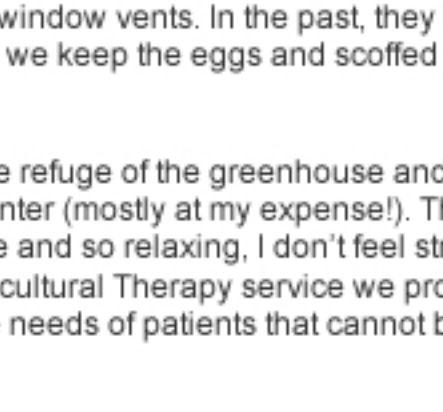
We finished and waited for the judges to make their decisions. On the morning of the announcement I waited for the text message from the designer, Vicky Page from Miracle-Gro. It came... We had been awarded a GOLD medal and the Best Exhibit in the Discovery section!!! There were tears and hugs all round, I am not sure how long it took to sink in!!

I continued to stay at the show for the next few days promoting HighGround and raising awareness of the work we do.

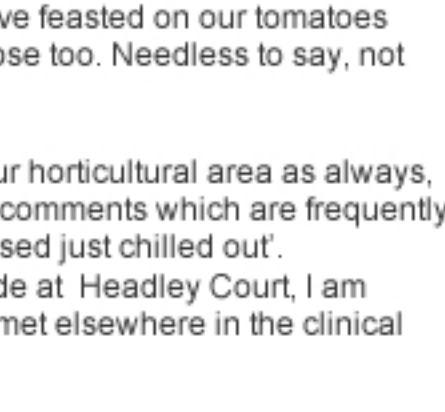
Our patients had a fabulous time and please read 'Good news' on our website for their reflections.



How to plant a Chelsea show garden. Dry run at Headley Court



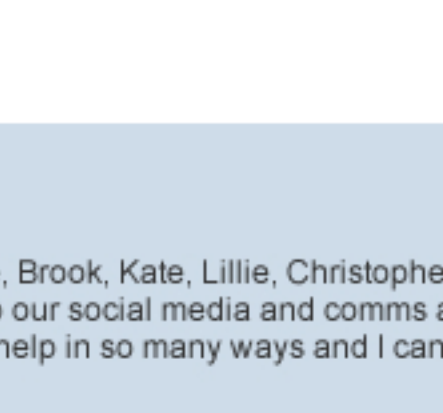
Carol and Vicky selecting plants for Chelsea at Hortus Loc



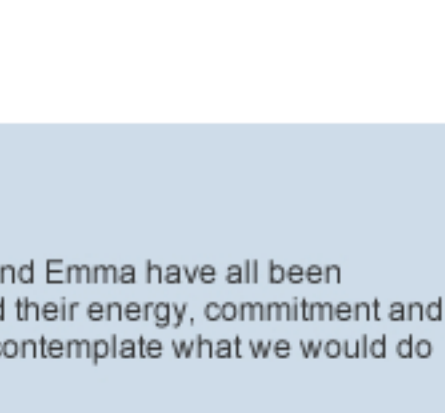
Building the Chelsea garden



Chelsea Pensioner and Carol



Chelsea: Day 2



Chelsea Gold!

The Greenhouses are looking splendid with tomatoes, cucumbers, melons and chillies all planted. That has been thanks to Gina, my assistant and our Gardening Volunteers. We already have tomatoes on the plants and one brave patient ate a chilli yesterday!! Very soon we will be bursting at the seams with lovely produce to sell on Farm Shop days, for patients to use for cooking therapy during their admissions and to take home to their families.

We will need to be vigilant because Mr Magpie and friends have decided to shimmy into the greenhouse via the opened roof window vents. In the past, they have feasted on our tomatoes and opened the cupboard where we keep the eggs and scoffed those too. Needless to say, not amused!!

The patients continue to enjoy the refuge of the greenhouse and our horticultural area as always, especially the cups of tea and banter (mostly at my expense!). The comments which are frequently made such as 'It's like family here and so relaxing, I don't feel stressed just chilled out'. After over three years of the Horticultural Therapy service we provide at Headley Court, I am delighted we are still meeting the needs of patients that cannot be met elsewhere in the clinical environment.

It's amazing what a chat, a cup of tea, purposeful activity, learning, watching things grow, eating fresh produce, an empathetic ear etc. can achieve.

We shall enjoy our Summer at Headley Court and will keep you posted!

Carol

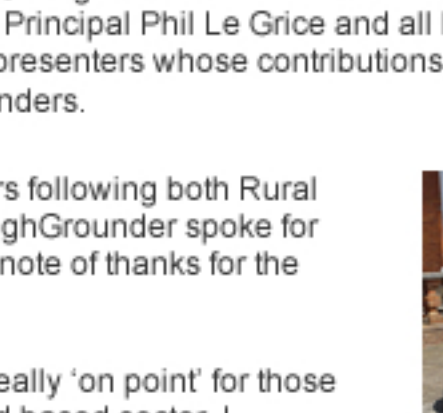
Horseferry Road

Our wonderful volunteers Dionne, Brook, Kate, Lillie, Christopher and Emma have all been working tirelessly to help develop our social media and comms and their energy, commitment and enthusiasm are humbling – they help in so many ways and I can't contemplate what we would do without them.

We had a reception at Horseferry Road in May to thank all our wonderful volunteers, introduce them and our precious funders to Ian our new Chairman, and tell them all how we plan to take HighGround forwards over the next 3 years with their help.



The reception at Horseferry Road



Rural Weeks

Our first 2 Rural Weeks at Bicton College have been delivered in 100% glorious Devon sunshine and we are hugely grateful to the Principal Phil Le Grice and all his staff for making us feel so welcome, and to all the fantastic presenters whose contributions make Rural Weeks so interesting and informative for our HighGrounders.

The feedback from HighGrounders following both Rural Weeks has been fantastic; one HighGrounder spoke for many when he said "Just a quick note of thanks for the fantastic Rural Week.

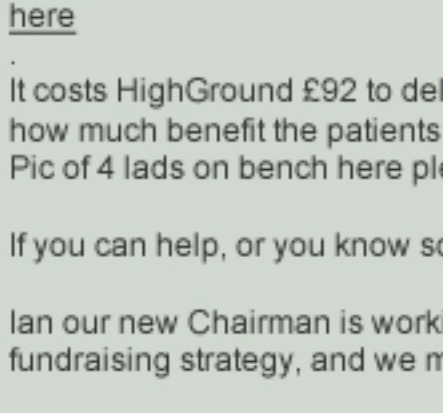
I truly believe the Rural Week is really 'on point' for those of us looking to move into the land based sector. I thoroughly enjoyed much of the thought provoking content of the course. There were even a couple of areas that I had not realised that I enjoyed so much and have now become a focus for the future.

The staff at Bicton went out of their way to help in any way possible. Nothing was too much trouble. I sincerely hope that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership between Bicton and HighGround, long may it continue.

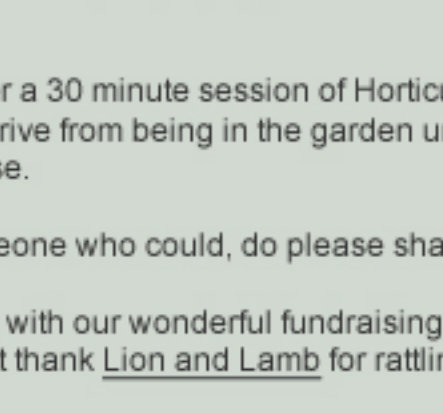
I also thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with the other members of the course, even Richard came out of his shell and joined in more and more.

Once again, many thanks for allowing me to join the Rural Week, it was a real pleasure. If there is anything I can do to help in the future please ask. If I can, I will.

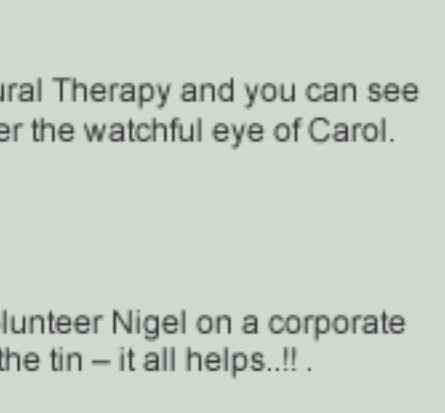
Tony Potter has made a significant contribution to our Rural Weeks and we wish him well in his new job and hope to welcome him back to Bicton as an evening speaker soon.



RXW10



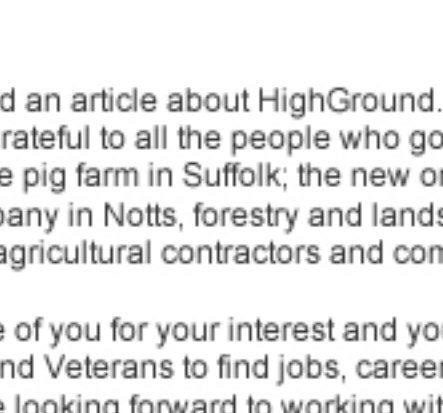
RXW11



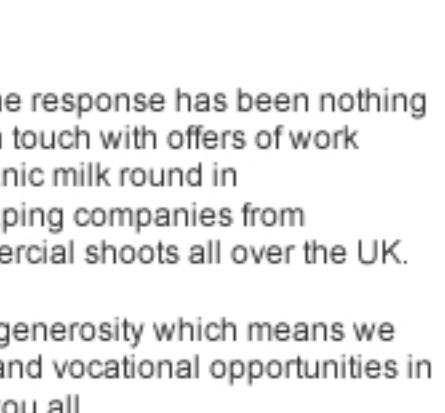
RXW11



RXW11



RXW11



Tony Potter

Brook is working hard on our new career guides with the help of our Development Board and we will start publishing them to coincide with our first land-based Insight Day for CTP. I did a webinar for the Officers Association (you can guess what it was about..!) and they have asked me to do another one in July. You can access it here.

Fundraising

Our main focus remains the Horticultural Therapy Challenge to raise the £354,000 needed to continue to run the Horticultural Therapy service at Headley Court and then, when it moves next year, at Stanford Hall, the new DNRC. So far we have received donations from the Robertson Ness Trust, Dougie Dalzell Memorial Trust and a company who want to remain anonymous (I wish they didn't so we could thank them properly...) and our Justgiving page can be accessed here

It costs HighGround £92 to deliver a 30 minute session of Horticultural Therapy and you can see how much benefit the patients derive from being in the garden under the watchful eye of Carol. Pic of 4 lads on bench here please.

If you can help, or you know someone who could, do please share.

Ian our new Chairman is working with our wonderful fundraising volunteer Nigel on a corporate fundraising strategy, and we must thank Lion and Lamb for rattling the tin – it all helps...!!

PR and media

In April Farmers Weekly published an article about HighGround. The response has been nothing short of amazing and we are so grateful to all the people who got in touch with offers of work experience and employment – the pig farm in Suffolk; the new organic milk round in Northumberland, the turfing company in Notts, forestry and landscaping companies from Perthshire to Devon, stud farms, agricultural contractors and commercial shoots all over the UK.

Thank-you to each and every one of you for your interest and your generosity which means we can help more Service Leavers and Veterans to find jobs, careers and vocational opportunities in the land-based sector and we are looking forward to working with you all.

Research

Huge thanks to Pro Bono Economics for all their help which made it possible to present Ian with a robust Business Plan to help him as he begins his tenure as Chairman of HighGround.

Clippings

I was very privileged to be invited by the Not Forgotten Association to the first Buckingham Palace garden party hosted by HRH Prince Harry and Ian joined me as my guest. I am so fortunate that he has chosen to bring his energy and talents to HighGround – we've got so much to do..!

Chairman and Anna outside Buckingham Palace after Not Forgotten Association garden party

