

Wednesday 11th September 2019

What shall I do now?

When I moved to Southbourne in 2014, I didn't know where Hengistbury Head was. By the time I found it, there was an interesting thatched building being 'built' over there, near Christchurch harbourside.

It takes a long time to feel part of a new place. When you are working there is contact with colleagues, even though it can be stressful. So, my friends from where I used to live encouraged me to volunteer. I can't remember where I found out Hengistbury Head needed volunteers, but I went along. Surprisingly, it is a bit daunting presenting oneself to volunteer. The rules seem serious and the people are all strangers. Four years later Hengistbury Head is a wonderful place to be. Fellow volunteers are friendly and come from extremely varied working lives. The Rangers are always busy and very friendly, providing support for the wildlife garden.



Every Wednesday a group of us turn up to garden. The tasks have changed greatly over the years. We are learning more about the individual nature of the garden as it establishes. Wind prevalence and its effect, salt damage and how it affects the trees in one part of the garden.

Today a brave gardener cut open one of the orange fruit hanging on the Passion Flower (see below). Carefully cocooned inside were bright red seeds in their own liquid. When tasted, and she was still standing, Felicity announced gleefully that they tasted sweet. **STOP, do not try this.** Passion Flower fruit do not ripen sufficiently in this country, or maybe those sold to eat are from a different kind.



As the light changes and the grey cloud cover descends, so the rosehips and spindle seeds appear brighter and the texture of the Alder Tree branches is accentuated.

What shall I do now? Let's walk in the garden and maybe volunteer at the Visitors Centre. See you soon.

The Volunteer Gardeners at Hengistbury Head Wildlife Garden.