

Strange occurrences at Orlandon Kilns

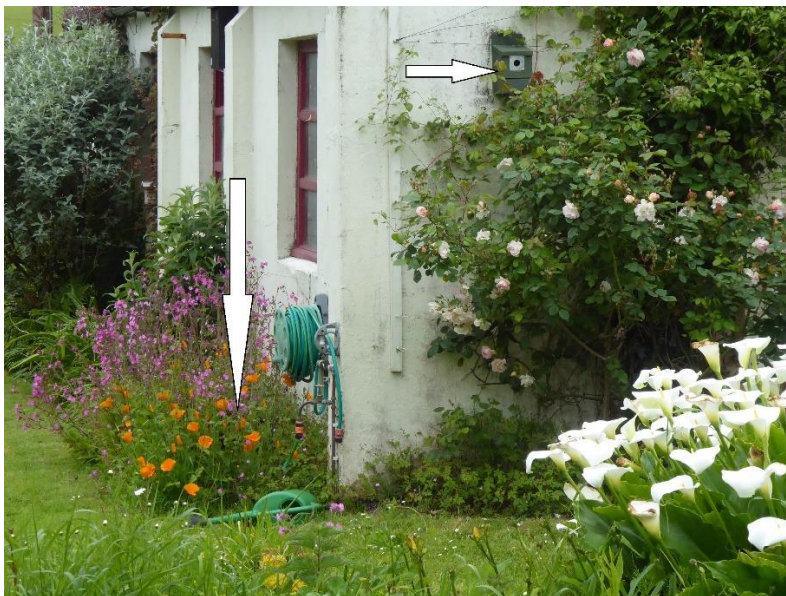
Two strange things have been happening in our garden over the last few weeks. First of all, we have a Willow Warbler nesting in a very unlikely place. The nest is on the surface of the soil/weeds in a large pot containing last year's tomato plants behind a mass of Red Campion and Californian Poppies. See picture below for the nest - the left arrow points to the nest, the right arrow is the nest opening. You would never know it was a nest if you hadn't seen the birds go in and out! The birds were very quick and unobtrusive when building the nest – we only noticed it happening because the view from our conservatory is in that direction. They were even more unobtrusive when incubating – we thought they had deserted.



A few days ago it appeared that young had hatched – there were regular visits to the nest, though very quick and with a low approach.

Just around the corner of the wall, only about 8 feet away, is a Great Tit nest in a box. The young hatched about a week ago and are being fed by both adults.

See the picture below for the location of the two nests.



Two days ago I noticed a Willow Warbler hanging around the Great Tit nest. It looked inside once or twice and eventually went in. By yesterday evening one Willow Warbler was regularly entering the Great Tit nest and feeding the young, though with very small food more suitable for its own young. And sometimes it would change its mind and fly down from the nest box to its own nest. The Great

Tits seem quite laid back about the whole thing and did not chase the Willow Warbler away. Meanwhile the other Willow Warbler seemed to be feeding the correct batch of young.

We have only seen this behaviour when the Great Tits are actively feeding – is the Willow Warbler being distracted by the begging of the Great Tit chicks?

The last picture shows a Willow Warbler at the Great Tit nest with food.



We will continue to watch and see how it all develops!

PS Inside the building (an ex-army pumphouse) there are 2 maybe 3 pairs of Swallows, a pair of Wrens and a pair of House Sparrows, so it's all quite busy around there at the moment!