

## Report on the nest boxes in Pannett Park - January 2012

The nest boxes were checked and cleaned out on 25 & 31 Jan 2012 by Walter Turner and Ron Wood.

It was one year since all the nest boxes were checked so all the nests would have been made in the Spring/Summer 2011.

Of the 23 boxes checked 11 had complete nests and another 5 had been partly used.

There were 2 coal tit, 1 great tit and 7 blue tit nests.

All the nest boxes were similar design with a sloping roof and an entrance hole in the front.

In addition 3 boxes were used for roosting (contained droppings!) and 2 had the start of a nest. Two nest boxes were repaired, by fixing rubber strips on cracked roofs to keep out water.

There are 25 nest boxes left as one box (No 3) was removed and 3 boxes were not checked.

Direct comparison with the last checking in Jan 2010 is not completely accurate as on that occasion it was 2 years since the nest boxes were opened. In Jan 2010 of the 20 boxes checked 15 had nests. The breakdown was 1 coal tit, 3 great tit and 11 blue tit nests.

### Possible conclusions

Usage of the nest boxes has continued at a similar level, although there have been less great tit nests. As noted before some of the boxes are fairly close to each other and thus usually there will only be one nest box used by a particular species each year. A very few boxes near dense foliage may be left unused because there are good natural nesting places.

Whether or not the nest boxes are used depends on a number of factors, including the supply of food. Birds using the boxes mainly eat insects, caterpillars, seeds and nuts so the availability of these foods in or near the park will encourage and support them.

### Possible developments

Maybe we need more boxes with slightly larger holes for great tits to nest in.

Remove Nos 2 (never used- unsuitable box) 4 (box too small and not a good design) and 11 (hole enlarged by squirrels).

Replace with new boxes in nearby sites.

Consider making and erecting a box for house sparrows.

### This year's results were :--

**1 In pine tree corner of Play area.** Blue tit nest with one egg shell and a few feathers. Good dry box. (Last time- Thin, damp old nest, probably a blue tit).

**2 In pine tree high up** Nest maybe too high up and only one made from plywood. It has never had a nest or signs of birds roosting in it. (Last time- no nest).

**\*3\* In Leylandii back of Museum.** On a tree in a group of 4, near the steps down from the car park. Very good nest with wool included- made by a coal tit. Box dry but it was taken down as these trees are due to be removed and replaced. (Last time- no nest).

**4 In scots pine tree, rear of Museum.** This one is visible from the Normanby room. Smaller box, dry and empty. (Last time- thin nest, probably a blue tit).

**5 In sycamore tree end of Museum terrace.** Very good nest of a blue tit. Remains of one chick, with feathers. This nest box has been used every year!

(Last time- Blue tit nest with one old egg. Rubber seal on roof replaced)

**\*6\* Monterey cypress avenue,** Nest box not found.... (Last time- dry box -great tit nest. Good nest).

**7 Monterey cypress avenue - on the side nearest to the Commemorative Garden.**

Empty again. Dry box, probably too close to No 5. (Last time- Empty).

**8 Monterey cypress, standing on it's own.** Near the Jurassic garden on the grassy slope. No nest, probably used for roosting some nights, droppings in the box.

(Last time- Dry box with blue tit nest).

**9 In the holly tree near the Gharial crocodile.** Box on the far side from the path.

No nest but dry. (Last time- Box damp and with one slug in it! Roof repaired and rubber seal replaced).

**10 In Monterey cypress lower side of pine wood. Near wooden bench & Chubb Hill Rd gate area.** Surprisingly no nest, probably used for roosting some nights, droppings in the box.

(Last time- Popular site, yet again in this box had a great tit nest).

**11 On a Scots pine tree in pine wood.** Box high up and hole enlarged by a squirrel.

No nest, probably used for roosting some nights, droppings in the box.

(Last time- Dry, blue tit nest and signs of roosting in the box).

**12 Commemorative garden.** Box empty, roof cracked & repaired. Step ladder needed as box low down!

(Last time- Blue tit nest, rather damp, repaired wooden roof to make more weather proof).

**13 On a beech tree on the slope.** Very good nest, probably a blue tit, excellent dry box.

(Last time- blue tit nest –dry box).

**14 On a cherry tree. On the slope, along from the Commemorative Garden looking down to Bagdale.** Missed it not checked!!

(Last time- old great tit nest. Big improvement from 3 years ago when this box was leaking and full of slugs!)

**15 On an old pear tree above Lily pool area.** Good blue tit nest with 3 eggs, 2 were complete. Perhaps these were infertile or was the nest abandoned? Dry box.

(Last time- Really dry box in a good position with a good great tit nest and 1 old egg).

**16 In conifer beside lit path, the junction with the path from the Bagdale gate to the Museum.** Blue tit nest, box dry, needs new screws.

(Last time- unable to turn screws levered open! Blue tit nest)

**17 In shrubbery with old pear tree, can be seen from near the main gate.** Yet again Star nest box, coal tit nest beautifully constructed with lots of feathers.

((Last time- Star nest box, coal tit nest with lots of feathers, well made).

**18 In Scots pine tree on path, edge of Walker Street.** Very dry, empty.

(Last time- Very dry, empty).

**19 In Little Park on sycamore tree.** Moss base for a nest, not completed, probably a blue tit. (Last time- Very dry, good blue tit nest).

**20 In Little Park on sycamore tree on top terrace.** Several feathers as a base for a nest, not completed, probably a blue tit. (Last time- thin, damp old nest, probably a blue tit).

### **Results from the 7 more nest boxes new in 2011.**

On 25<sup>th</sup> Jan and 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2011 another 7 nest boxes that I made were put in the Park. Four were the same design as the others, however No 25 is an open fronted diamond shaped nest box that could be used by robins and wrens. Nos 26 and 27 are wedge shaped boxes made with rough timber still with bark on it. They are designed hopefully for tree creepers although other small birds may use them. Tree creepers as well as nuthatches have been seen in the Park.

**21 In a holly tree along the Chubb Hill Rd side** near the low side of the car park. Good blue tit nest, sadly 2 dead large chicks with virtually adult feathers, hopefully the others survived. Box dry and secure.

**22 In a holly tree just across the path near the topside of the pine wood.** Very good blue tit nest. Box dry and in excellent condition.

**23 On the trunk of an ash tree near the Bagdale gate.** Excellent great tit nest, a large deep cup mainly made from moss.

**24 On the trunk of ivy covered Scots pine tree near the Quaker's burial ground.** Empty and dry. Box in pristine condition but virtually covered by the last year's ivy growth!

**25 In a shrub on the boundary with the Quaker's burial ground.** Open fronted diamond shaped box (for robins). Empty & dry.

**26 Higher up in the Holm Oak that is on the lower corner of the pine wood.** Tree creeper nest box. Roof screws too stiff to move, box not checked but no obvious sign of it being used.

**27 Higher up in a Monterey cypress.** Tree creeper nest box. Not checked as roof does not unscrew.

Un-numbered nest box on holm oak beside Play area. Box empty. Nest box made of plywood by cubs? Not weather proof & hole too low down at the front.