

Special feature

Diary of a Female Blackbird

Sitting pretty

Day 1 and we have moved back into our old pad tucked under the beams of the out - buildings our humans use for their cars. The nest needs a bit of a clean up, but a quick trip for some new lining material will do the job nicely.

Typical! My other half has pushed off saying he needs to see a man about a worm. They always do when it comes to the real work of laying and incubating the eggs. Let him try it next time.

Had forgotten the irritating habits of our humans, who are forever opening and closing their garage doors, just when I've been out to forage. Do they think I have all day to hang around with provisions in my beak? Female human thinks if she keeps still I can't see her. Pitiful! Time she went off foraging herself and left me in peace. Still I have laid the nicest little clutch of light blue/green eggs, pretty as you like. Thirteen days to go, and counting!

One for Mummy, one for Daddy

Day 14 and at last Jack the lad returns with a present of worms. Try to ignore him



but the eggs have hatched and we are all too hungry. At least I get out for a good long wash and brush up. By pippin they are the biggest, noisiest nest - lumps known to blackbird. Beginning to

think Jack has cuckoo blood, just as Ma warned!

Cleaned up the nest and carefully dropped neat waste pellets on human's car. Had good giggle at reaction!

Great beaks always open.

Give us a break! The humans have gone doolally, forever coming out, saying "shush" to each other and gazing up at us with gormless expressions. Need a brood of their own; would soon cure them of such nonsense. Funny things humans, tall and pinkish with no feathers, the female much smaller, but quite noisy calling - cry to her mate. Sounds like "wherareu?"

Have named the three fledge-lumps, Tom, Dick and Harry. With a bit of encouragement from me, Harry has tottered out onto a beam, and is sitting there looking squat and bemused. The other two loll around eating their heads

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off. Have sharp words with their father.

Blackbird Bye- Bye!

Day 28 and I have booted them all out. Empty nest syndrome, ha! Time they got a day job. Tom has squeezed himself behind a pot of mint by their back door. Human comes out and looks at him, he pretends he hasn't seen her as not too sure what he is supposed to do with a human.

Dick is in the woodshed, and Harry has disappeared!

Exhausted trying to keep tabs on the wretched things. Spent all day trying to get them to hop up 3 flights of garden steps. Eventually, get Dick and Harry up and near garden shed, Tom is sulking behind the mint pot again.

Look everywhere. The garden shed provides the answer. Human and I find Dick on the top rung of the ladder, with Harry on the next rung down. They refuse to move, despite coaxing from us both. We give up. Have trained human to leave a



private food supply, we both try to encourage the fledge-lumps to leave the shed. They refuse, beady eyed.

Human gives up trying to garden, and retires to her own nest, thoughtfully wedg-

ing open the shed door.

I take all three of them to the bird table, to learn to forage. They do this very successfully and shamelessly, begging from bluetit parents half their size. I turn a blind eye.

Off our hands!

Day 48, yippee! The youngsters are finally off our hands! Jack and I meet up with our humans who are sunbathing. They think we are doing the same, but we are actually spreading our wings to get rid of itches and bugs. Have formed useful alliance with humans, but no signs of nesting behaviour from them. Talking of which, Jack is looking frisky. Oh well, here we go again!

Liz Clarke-Watson

NEWS FROM FIFIELD and IDBURY

Lunch & Grand Easter Egg Hunt

at Idbury Manor - 12th April at 12.30 pm

Mr. & Mrs. Wise are kindly opening the garden of Idbury Manor for this event, so do come and join us

Lunch of jacket potatoes and fillings - £5 (half price for those under 10)
Cakes, books, produce, raffle

