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Self-taught photographer spreads her wings

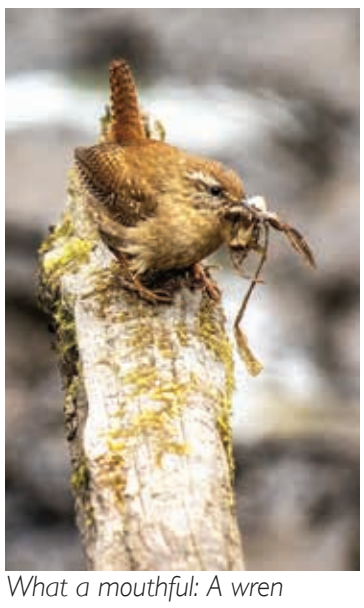
By David Melsome

Laura Porto enjoys her job as a nanny homeschooling a six-year-old boy with autism and looking after his two-year-old brother but they are long days and sometimes she feels burned out. So she decided to treat herself to a camera and a lens for her birthday in February and since then she has been visiting Coldfall Wood and Alexandra Park every weekend to record the resident bird life.

Green wing: A parakeet makes a spectacular sight

"At Christmas my partner gave me some binoculars because he could see I was interested in nature and I fell in love and decided to get the camera," said Laura. "It's a great way to connect with the beautiful local wildlife." With no formal lessons behind her, Laura has taught herself the techniques of patience and perseverance needed to capture stunning photos of birds in constant motion. A tiny wren with a mouthful of nesting material and a magnificent black crow coming in to land are just some of the images she now has in her portfolio.

Landing gear: A crow comes descends onto the woodland floor



What a mouthful: A wren gathers some nest-building material

Garden favourite: A robin explores Coldfall Wood

Sing for better breathing

A weekly singing group is being started for people with lung conditions. You don't need any singing experience or musical ability, and it's free for all residents in Barnet.

Professionals from Starling Arts will lead online sessions using physical and vocal exercises to improve breathing for people with COPD, asthma, pulmonary fibrosis or the after-effects of Covid-19. For more information or to register your interest for online sessions in 2021 visit: www.starlingarts.com/sfbb

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