



ALTHOUGH THIS AUTUMN NEWSLETTER is a bit later than usual, the late arrival of the first proper frosts and the abundant rosehips that still cling to the edible hedgerow behind the pole barn mean winter still feels some way away. As well as the transition from the summer pace of work to a less frenetic pace that characterises work at Canalside in the winter, we are also in a period of transition on the staff team. You may have already seen that we are advertising for a new grower/manager. This will be someone to work alongside Will and the rest of the team during the growing season next year, and ultimately step into Will's shoes when he moves on later next year. We will be interviewing in December and by the time the next newsletter comes out at the end of January, we will know who will be joining the team, hopefully as soon as early February.

This newsletter brings you all the usual updates – find out about this year's successes in



Some of the Crown Prince squash harvest
(photo: Sarah Hunt)

Will's News from the Land. We welcome new members, both big and small in **New Arrivals**. The **Education Project** had a busy spell before the half term holiday – read about the highlights of those visits, and of our recent **Events**. There are the usual updates from our partner projects: **The Willows** and **Canalside Community Bees**. On the last two pages you will find the **Small Ads** and **Members' Corner notices**. I hope you feel ready for the winter as it approaches, and are enjoying the winter look share for warming soups and rich earthy root dishes. Happy reading, perhaps curled up in front of a fire while the days shorten and the weather cools!

Ali, November 2015

NEWS FROM THE LAND – by Will Johnson

It feels decidedly quieter on the land since we got the last of the potatoes in. Last year at the camping weekend about forty of us worked the whole morning and we got the entire crop of potatoes into the store. This year about forty of us worked the whole morning and we managed about a quarter of the field: The total weight in the store last year was about two and a half tonnes; this year, after four(!) work mornings of hard work we've stored about seven and a half.



Filling the potato storage crates

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The maincrop of onions also did very well this year, a best harvest ever, with three tonnes stored. It looks like being very good years for leeks and parsnips too (though they will stay in the ground for the winter) and decent seasons for most of the other roots, if not spectacular. It was, nationally speaking, a poor year for winter squash (including pumpkins) but we recorded pretty average yields for those, which is great news.



Abundant onions at the harvest in August



*Uchi ki kuri squash
(photo: Sarah Hunt)*

All seems to be well, going into the winter. We feel like we've got plenty of produce for the next seven or eight months already in the store or in the ground, and the crops that are in place ready to provide fresh green leaves and florets come the spring (purple sprouting broccoli and roscoff cauliflowers) are all well established and looking strong (it's fair to say that they usually do look great in October and then start to look worryingly feeble in January, but still, at least they look great now). The fruit bearing summer crops from the tunnels

are all but done now (though you should have those green tomato chutney recipes to hand in the next few weeks) and in their place are brassicas and salad leaves which have all established well. The final planting of 2015 will be a few thousand garlic next month for harvest next spring.



Pulling mesh over the newly transplanted onions

Outside, the fields are set for winter. The final overwintered onions went in last week (and had to be covered with mesh when we found that rabbits actually love the taste of onions when there's absolutely nothing else about), the clover leys* are up and looking good, the rye and vetch covering this year's potato and onion plots has germinated well and is enjoying the rain. It was the first season that we did all of the field cultivations and drillings without the use of Leasowe's big green John Deere tractor and actually managed to do



Our tractor, Shirley Massey, has a new parking spot in the working end of the pole barn

everything either by hand or with our (now very own) Massey Ferguson 230. It is good to feel a bit more independent and self-sufficient.

* leys – the 'green manures' that we grow in the vacant plots to hold or build the fertility while the land rests between crops (we use clover, rye and vetch in the leys).

We picked the last of the apples last week and ended on a high in what was a patchy year for top fruit, the yellow skinned Duke of Devonshire's yielded really well and were of a good quality. It was a hit and miss year for the plums, one or two really excellent trees but a lot of poor

performers. The pears have been disappointing, though we are expecting a good crop of cooking pears called Worcester Blacks which we will pick soon. Now that we have done most of the harvest we can make a plan for the winter to see what improvements can be made for the trees



Apples from one of the October pickings, awaiting distribution in the share



King-sized sprouts for this winter's shares

and also decide if a 'pick-your-own' system can work well for some of the more perishable fruit.

Ending on a positive note, we got a surprise last week when counting up all the cabbages and had a quick look at some Brussels sprouts alongside. I was quite happy that they had had a decent season but all of a sudden the plants are covered in green cricket balls. We did put some cow manure on that patch but it was a conservative amount and this boon means there are sprouts galore and not just for Christmas.

Will, 4 November 2015

NEW ARRIVALS... – by Ali Jeffery

We welcome one small arrival in this edition of the newsletter – *Helga Weirather and Jonathan Parry* now have two small boys since the arrival of Aiden in late July, a little brother for Owen. Four year old Owen is already a keen helper at Canalside, and we look forward to Aiden enjoying the space when he is a little older too!



Aiden at 1 week old

We also extend a warm welcome to a large number of new members who have joined or re-joined Canalside recently, mainly through having trial shares from our summer publicity stalls, but also some new social members:

- *Ian Walker and family* • *Lucy Bassett and family* • *Helen, Beth and Josh Smith* •
- Andrew Ferguson* • *Andy Thomson* • *Marine Favre-Decloux* • *Sarah Bentley and family* •
- *Deanna White* • *Tom Crawford & Tamara Galon and family* • *Gabriela Alecsa and family*

*Quentin Coret & Virginie Sauzon · Jean-Claude & Rabia Morel and family · Di Harris ·
· Mark & Lara Smith and family · Nisrine Aberyire & Janus Jensen and family ·
Izzie Grove · And finally, missed out in the last edition, Frankie Karki and family!*

Following the call out for new workshare volunteers in the summer, we have several additions to the field team – here are the new people who are now regulars at the bi-weekly work mornings:



Nikki Cooper



Beth Smith



Terry Evans



Josh Smith



Izzie Grove



Helen Smith

SITE DEVELOPMENTS – *by Ali Jeffery*

The last three months have been fairly busy on the growing side of things. Now that we're heading into our quieter time of year, we'll be looking at which infrastructure tasks we need to work on over the winter. Already in the pipeline is a tool store to be constructed next to the pole barn, to keep frequently used tools easily accessible but tidy and out of reach of small hands. Nothing else significant is planned at the moment, although watch this space to see what transpires over the winter.

EDUCATION PROJECT – *by Ali Jeffery*

We had a busy run on the education project during October, and were able to offer all groups a vegetable snack thanks to the volunteers who came forward to help during the visits, all of which were confirmed at short notice. It's very satisfying to enable the children to try the vegetables they have encountered, whilst they are still at the farm, as I think has a greater impact on them, and results in the children tasting things they might not otherwise have tried. The new kitchen made the preparation of the snack of raw vegetables, and afterwards the washing up of 30 plates and mugs for all the staff, so much easier than in the past!



Going on a vegetable hunt



We hosted two Reception classes of 4 to 5 year olds, who were on their first trip since starting at 'big school'. With those very young children, the focus was on experiencing the farm and the vegetables using all their senses, as well as thinking about whether they grow under the ground or on the plant above the ground. Some really took using their senses very seriously as you can see from the photos here (left)!

The other visit was a year 3 class, so we were able to think about more complicated things than the younger classes such as which part of the plant we eat for different vegetables.

The next visits will take place after 1st April, as it is too cold during the winter and early spring to have children at the farm for school visits. However, if you would like your child's class to visit, now is the time to start telling the teacher about the free opportunities we offer. The spring visits usually use the theme 'How does my garden grow?' and cover topics such as what



Harvesting the beetroot we found



Comparing cousins in the brassica family (cauliflower and romanesco broccoli)

plants need to grow; pests and beneficial organisms; composting and fertility building. There are fliers in the collection space that you can take to pass onto a teacher you know, or direct them to the website, where they can download the teachers' information pack under 'Getting Involved' > 'Educational visits'. Visits should be booked 4 weeks in advance to allow me to make all the arrangements that are needed.

EVENTS – by Ali Jeffery

There seems to have been a plethora of social events since the last newsletter! Here's what went on, if you missed them:

August – Jam making workshop:

A small group of members joined Gareth for our first official food workshop in the new field kitchen, making jam from the fruits of the orchard. The group used the abundant



Summer fruitfulness preserved!

blackcurrants that had been frozen earlier in the month, and as well as blackberries and plums from the orchard to make three different types of jam. Everyone who took part was able to take home jars of jam that they had helped to make.

September – Food & Drink Festival publicity stall:

We had another very successful publicity stall, and a large number of trial shares from the event have now translated into new subscribing members of our community. Thank you to all the members who brought their enthusiasm for and stories about Canalside to help visitors know understand how our scheme works and what it's like to be involved with it.

– camping weekend and big autumn work task – the potato harvest:

The weekend started with the collection space being converted into a mini cinema for Friday Film Night, and a small group enjoyed a showing of *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*.

As you've already read in Will's *News from the Land* the potato harvest took several work mornings to complete this year, despite a good turnout on the work morning of the camping



The morning potato harvest



Fermented veg workshop with Erica

weekend. After a morning of physical activity, in perfect potato harvesting weather, the social area was filled with hungry people enjoying the space and the food that had been brought to share.

During the afternoon, Erica Moody showed a number of adults and children how to make fermented vegetable preserves, with lots of examples to



try as well, and the dinner preparations made the most of the new on-site cooking facilities – the oven had its first Canalside use (we felt it only right to do baked potatoes for our harvest feast!). The evening feast was enjoyed by over 20 people, with a fire to follow and a number of people staying at the farm overnight.



Helping to cook dinner

October – apple pressing:

A large number of families enjoyed a beautiful autumn day in the social area, with some accordion music to accompany their labours juicing apples from the orchard and Zinnia Allen's garden (thanks to member Guy Hodgson for the link, and John Liddamore for organising collection of apples from Zinnia's). A considerable quantity of that juice went home with people, and through the magic of wild fermentation may be transforming itself into cider as I type!

CAN YOU HELP US WITH OUR PHOTO RECORD? – by Ali Jeffery

It is a challenge to make sure that we have a few photos from each event at the farm, and photos showing the range of things that happen in work mornings. If you ever take any good photos of activities at the farm that you would be happy for us to use in the weekly updates, quarterly newsletters and so on (with credits) please email them to me on mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk. And if you're on Facebook, please do consider uploading photos to our Facebook group to help keep it active, however please avoid putting photos there of other people's children, unless they have given you permission to do so. I check with parents before using photos of their children in the newsletter / weekly update.

CANALSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD - PARTNER PROJECTS' UPDATE

Canalside Community Bees, by Dave Fenton

We're coming close to the end of the Bee Club membership year and renewal forms will be emailed out to all current and past members directly from the Bee Club. If you are interested in becoming a member for 2016 and want to know more about the things we do then please drop us an email at canalsidecommunitybees@yahoo.co.uk. We'll then send you a membership form directly.

Membership runs from January until December each year and costs £20 for an individual or household. We run a number of activities during the year with regular apiary visits during the summer months, talks and workshops relating to beekeeping and using hive products.

But the highlight is surely the share of the honey harvest in the Autumn. After a fairly slow start in the spring this year the bees came on well and allowed us to harvest enough honey to provide at least 4lbs for each member.

MEMBERS' CORNER Do you have any interesting projects, charity fund-raisers or other not-for-profit activities you'd like to promote to your fellow Canalsiders? If so, then this is the space for your free advert! Get in touch with Ali for advertising in future issues of the newsletter.

On 29th November, a huge protest will be taking place in London on the eve of the crucial Paris climate talks.

Join the **People's March** in London

on **29th November**.

Coaches leaving from Snitterfield and Stratford at approx. 8.30a.m.

(precise timing to be confirmed).

Tickets - Adults £10, Children £5 available by emailing chairperson@snitterfieldacc.org

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Email chairperson@snitterfieldacc.org
www.snitterfieldacc.org

FREE – 3 CONCORD LIFT CAR SEATS. These are suitable for children aged 4 to 12 years old and comprise integrated booster seat with adjustable back and neck rest. Seat it secured in the car using the standard seat belt. Flexible and comfortable for growing children! Phone Christine Fenton 01926 889715 or 07879 423520 for further details. Photos can be sent on request.

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Songlines Winter Concert, Sat 5 Dec 2015, 8pm, St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Rd, L'Spa. Come and join 100-strong community choir Songlines in their annual concert for **WaterAid**. They will be performing a wide array of scintillating acapella with their usual panache: from Dusty Springfield to Leonard Cohen, from haunting Scottish verse to Swedish techno, from Carol King to Japanese folk - Songlines are the original "Naked Choir". Their winter concert is always a warm, fuzzy community event - we hope you will come and be part of it. Tickets (£5 / £3) will be on sale from Gaia, Regent Place, from mid Nov.

SMALL ADS Do you have any business or money-making ventures you'd like to advertise to other members of Canalside? Then this is the space for you. Please contact Ali for future adverts.

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CDs on sale! Singer/Songwriter Eleanor Brown will be selling her albums in the veg pickup space throughout December, with a special deal for Canalside members!

Eleanor lived and worked at the farm for 3 years before she recently left for pastures new and many of the songs on these albums were created here so don't miss out on supporting this local musician if you like acoustic/folk music... or know someone who does. At 5 inches square they're the perfect stocking filler! Alternatively you can order her music or download it online www.eleanorbrownmusic.com and eleanorbrown.bandcamp.com

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Link to our Flickr photos for a fuller selection of photos of the past 3 months:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65686573@N02/sets/>

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Next newsletter due out end of January 2015.

Deadline for ads with payment, and notices – end of Sunday 17th January.

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Canalside Community Food, Leasowe Farm, Southam Road, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1TY. t: 07758 340491 e: mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk
w: www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk