



Canalside Community Food
a community supported agriculture scheme

AUTUMN 2010

newsletter no.17

Hello! We're coming to the end of an idyllic summer, where the lack of rain and spells of warm weather have made a refreshing change to the last few years' summers. The stall at the Peace Festival enjoyed one of the several hot weekends we've had. Thank you so much to all the members who helped out on the stall, and through selling veg plants helped us to raise about £450 to support the project! As well as having strange effects on the hedgerows and fruit trees, making blackberries and apples ripen several weeks early, and plums for the most part late, the weather has also presented some new challenges in the field. Read about this and much more in the **News from the Field** from Charlie and Tom. Tom also writes to bring us up-to-date with news of **Site Changes**. There's an update on progress in the Schools' Project from me, while Caz writes about some of our social events – the highly successful Folk on the Water event in June and details of the annual ceilidh, to be held in September – just days away.

Look to the end for details of two exciting events in the local area, in the **Members' Corner**, and some members' interesting business ventures in the **Small Ads**.

Alongside all the project news, Caz has gathered together another fantastic collection of seasonal recipes, to give you a preview of which veggies will be coming in from the fields in the next few months and ideas for cooking up a storm with them when they make their appearance.

Huge thanks to veg member, **Naomi Heaton**, who has voluntarily laid out this newsletter, saving me hours of grappling with text boxes and the vagaries of Word!

Enjoy the last of the summer, and the harvest bounty that goes with it!

Ali, August 2010 P.S. a big apology from Naomi for taking so long laying up the newsletter in InDesign!

News from the field – by Charlie and Tom

Another sunny day rolls by as we write this and reminds us of what has characterised the last few months: a distinct lack of rain. We came out of the warmest driest April for god knows how long, which actually did great things for all the poly tunnel crops in time for the 'hungry gap'. Once again though the hungry gap didn't feel so hungry, remember those baby bunched beets and delicious true spinach and most importantly the sugar snap peas which were wonderful and bountiful...mmm that was a good month...Another new addition to the hungry gap was basil in pots which was a nice novelty to be able to share with all our lovely members. Then the avalanche of cauliflowers hit us! Even we veg obsessed growers found that all a bit much and next year we will be cutting down on the numbers of caulis and attempting to spread them out better. Obviously, as you can imagine, it's almost impossible not to get a glut of some crops. Courgette anyone?

So it's been busy, busy, busy through this whole period; timing has been crucial and long hours have been worked to keep everything on track including weeding and masses of sowing and transplanting. However, with some good work parties lately we have had some great weeding sessions. It's always a bit demoralising weeding five beds of brassicas by yourself and such a delight to see many hands make light work of it.

The whole of May, June and July were exceptionally dry, presenting a completely new set of problems and challenges for us. But our new irrigation system came with perfect timing and with higher pressure it allowed us easily to water in all the plants that were being transplanted into the dust! The dry weather led to troublesome establishment for all the drilled crops, but don't worry it's looking like another bumper crop of carrots. :-)

The Peace Festival was a wonderful event, as ever, and having grown extra bits and pieces to sell, our stall did well with some new faces showing interest in the project. Thanks to all those who pitched in and helped over that weekend.

Late June through July has seen some lovely new potatoes in the share along with some great early

aubergines. There has also been a bumper crop of dwarf French beans, and let's not forget the courgettes! We promise to grow fewer next year but they do seem to be loving this hot dry weather as do several other crops – the squash in particular are looking great.



Most recently, work parties helped to harvest the garlic and onions both of which look like good crops, especially the garlic which we hope to be able to give in the share each week for some six months this winter. The onions had a hard time through the dry spring but some late irrigation seems to have pulled them through and it's an amazing sight to see them carpeting the fifth tunnel...would be nice to just leave them there....but no, soon enough we'll have to make room for those winter salad packs we all love so much.

We've had great support and help out on the fields getting all these jobs done. As always many thanks to all those doing weekly workshares and of course to members on the work mornings. Seasonal labour is so appreciated at this time of year so special thanks to Neal and Loz for helping us to keep everything on song.

Looking ahead we have the main crop of spuds to look forward to and the splendid variety of late summer and autumn crops. Enjoy the sunshine!

Site Developments - by Tom

Well, the site down at Canalside has had quite a major makeover in the last three months. With my Leasowe Farm / Dryad Organics hat on I've been involved with erection of a new barn that none of you who come to the farm to collect veg will have missed! It will house the crops grown on the farm and some of our machinery too. It will also be used to store all of Canalside's crops, which up until now we've stored in the older farm barn some distance from the site, so it'll make for a far more convenient system. As a result of the landscaping for this new barn we've been able to elevate the area below the car park and create a space that can be developed by Canalside in the future. Our plans are not fully developed as yet, but we're trying to let things take a fairly natural course.

The main things we've added to the project site in the last three months are two new sheds. The first has become our first dedicated compost toilet shed, which is a great breakthrough having had a compost loo that shared its shed with the tool store up until now! Also in this shed we have installed a hand-washing sink, which is soon to have hot running water too. The other shed, which looks suspiciously like a Hansel and Gretel house, is being developed for the growers to have somewhere to make their plans for the fields, house their muddy kit and generally keep as much clutter out of the yurt as possible!

This has left the yurt as more of a shop front for Canalside; we've given it a make-over and hope that this process of improvement will continue and that you're enjoying the experience of using it these days. At some point we may decide to take the plunge and move the whole set up down to below the car park so as to have all our structures in vaguely the same area. The geodome has been working successfully through the Spring and we're now looking to getting it smartened up in time for the annual Ceilidh.



Looking forward to the Autumn and Winter we're hoping that we'll be able to start planting up some of the social area by putting in some willow hedges and trees around the site. Kate's proposals for this area were up in the yurt for some time for comments so we'll start to develop that with the possibility of the newly created permaculture group in Leamington helping too. If you're interested in getting involved with that side of the project then please get in touch!



New Arrivals...

We have had a few fantastic workshares join our team of growers.

In May, Liz and Blair Allan joined the team, having learnt about Canalside through the Home Ed group, which other members are also part of. Whilst one of them helps with the field work each week, the other continues the home education of their two sons. Since they're both self-employed (Liz as a seamstress, particularly making curtains, and Blair as a welder) being a workshare allows them to have local, organic veg which they might not otherwise be able to commit to financially. And they love the opportunities Canalside gives to bring their children to the farm, as they have both done a lot of agricultural work (including during their travels round Britain) and want to show the boys how and where their food is grown. We've also really appreciated additional seasonal labour from them this summer, as well as enjoying their musical talents at some of our socials.



Dave Jones has recently joined as a permanent workshare. He lives in Warwick with his partner, Brenda, and as well as his volunteering at Canalside, seems to keep busy with a number of different types of paid work! He'd had an allotment, but after his allotment sharer moved away and two big floods covered his plot, realised that he was beaten! He heard about Canalside last year, and joined the waiting list to become a workshare. He's enjoying experiencing food growing again and is hoping that he might lose inches from his waist, as he did when he took on his allotment! In his spare time he loves being out in the

countryside and baking bread – the more unusual and nutritious the better! He also tries hard to be a greener human being.

Amy Willoughby is a temporary workshare until the end of the summer, helping us to stay on top of the many tasks of the busy growing season. Here's what she says about herself:

I've only lived in Leamington for two years but have been in the local area for most of my life. I teach part time in a Further Education college, and have just completed the first year of an Architecture degree, so taking on a temporary work share over the summer has coincided nicely with my time off, and given me an opportunity to rest my brain and do something more physical. My time at the farm still feels like a real treat, especially in the sunshine! I have a daughter, Megan, who isn't a farm regular but is joyful company, contrary to my expectations of her teenage years.

...And Departures

Staffing changes are just around the corner, as Pete Corbett, our full-time grower will leave the project to explore other avenues in late September. His work has been highly valued in the year since he arrived at Canalside, and we've particularly appreciated his knowledge of irrigation, which couldn't have come at a better time, given the lack of rain we've had this year! However, even before Pete came into his own with the irrigation, the share looked fantastic, and the 'hungry gap' was almost non-existent. His hard work and friendship in the field will be missed, and we wish him much happiness and fulfilment on whichever path life takes him.



And ready to join the growing team as our new full-time grower is Will Johnson, who is currently working as a grower in Hertfordshire, and brings a range of great experience and new areas of knowledge to Canalside. Will already has a good idea of what he's letting himself in for, as he's currently in charge of the veg growing for a box scheme of a similar size to Canalside. What's more, he's attended a few work mornings at the farm and so has some insight into the project. We look forward to welcoming him to the project and introducing him properly once he's found his feet at Canalside.

Fruit Field

Dick Ashworth, who has been a key player in the fruit field, has given me a short update on the fruit project. He told me that the trees and bushes are mostly doing well, despite the severe lack of rain in recent months. A few raspberry canes have suffered as a result, and so he's ordering some replacements, along with some additional soft fruit bushes and a few unusual varieties of top fruit trees. These will arrive ready for planting in the late autumn or winter. Gareth Davies (founding member of Canalside and another key player in getting the fruit field established) has been doing some regular maintenance work on project to ensure that everything continues to establish well, ready for the first small harvests next summer. Already the raspberry canes are beginning to show some fruits, otherwise it's all growing slowly and we must all continue to be patient until then!



Schools' project - by Ali

Since the last newsletter, the education project for Canalside, in collaboration with Action 21, has made steady progress towards the pilot workshop. We contacted Radford Semele Primary School, the first choice for a partner school as it is in the same local community as we are. The school was keen to work with us, and suggested that the year one class visit the project. The class teacher has now had a pre-workshop visit to Canalside and we are working towards holding the workshop at the end of September.

To help us prepare for the workshop, Canalside members and Action 21 volunteers are invited to join the 'Fab fabs' session at the Sydni Centre between 11am and 3pm on Thursday 9th September. Activities will include making feely bags, painting papier mache models of vegetables and drawing/colouring/painting simple pictures of vegetables. Space is limited, so any interested individuals are requested to contact Amy Footer (amy@action21.co.uk).

The workshop will be held on Thursday 7th October, with a few hours preparing the site the day before (Wednesday 6th October). I would love to hear from anyone who would be able to help prepare the geodome and the site the day before the workshop, or to help on the day with logistics and generally helping the workshop run smoothly. Please email me (mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk) if you would like to help.

Socials

Recent socials - Folk on the Water and the Summer Solstice - by Caz

Canalside were proud to join together with the Folk on the Water crew for an event held here on Monday 28th June. Dutch Van Spall and an assortment of musicians travelled the Grand Union canal for 2 weeks raising money for Zoe's Place Children's Hospice in Coventry, as well as linking up canal-side communities along the way. The whole tour was a great success raising in the region of £3000 and the Canalside event in particular went really well, with £70 plus donations to the sealed bucket being collected. On the evening itself, Dutch said to me that he felt 'nourished and heartened that projects such as Canalside existed, and how he felt already that it was going to be one of the highlights of the tour'.

Huge thanks again to Claire Honey who ran some drumming workshops for children (small AND big!) throughout the afternoon - her enthusiasm and wonderful smile were truly inspirational. Many thanks also to Ali Smith for her fantastic face painting creations, to Helen Mitchell for her 'Insect Hotel' demonstrations, to Liz and Blair Allen for their beautiful music, and to everyone else that gave amazing help and support in setting up and taking down the whole thing. It really was another shining example of a truly wonderful community of people coming together to create something from almost nothing.



Lammas and the onion harvest - by Ali

With the garlic harvest already completed the week before, a fine day and a good turnout helped us to complete the onion harvest from Canalside field in record time. Most volunteers moved on to some weeding in the latter part of the morning, while others laid the onions out to dry in one of the polytunnels. (The harvest was completed a week later with another good sized group bringing in the slightly smaller bulbs from Ship-



ton Hill, where the late watering bulked them up enough to harvest.) Children enjoyed a bug hunt with Gareth Davies, finding a wide range of butterflies, beetles and other creepy crawlies in the grass around the geodome. These were all studied with great interest before being released back into the wild after lunch.



After the Lammas harvest the usual delicious shared lunch was eaten, with courgettes featuring heavily in a delicious cake, and other savoury offerings!

CANALSIDE CEILIDH 2010 - by Caz

Saturday 25th September, 7pm onwards After the success of last year's ceilidh, we have decided to run this as an annual fundraising event. We will again be raising money for our new fruit project so please come along and join us for an evening of dancing, singing, fire-side relaxing and general revelry. The comments we had from people last year were truly amazing – the greatest one by far being "The best party I've ever been to in Leamington" – so let's see if we can make this year's one even better!

"Acclaimed folk dance band" Melodic Evil will be leading us through the ceilidh dances and while they take a well-earned break, there will be an opportunity for all of you to get up and take the stage during our open mic session. No need to tell us in advance, just bring your voices, instruments, poetry, whatever else you may like to perform, along with you on the night.

The geodome will be transformed once more into the Canalside Bar, serving up a range of tipples, from local Slaughterhouse ale to wine, cider and fruit juice. And we got round to getting ourselves a Small Events License this year too, so no more ridiculous system of buying raffle tickets and miraculously winning a drink every time! Just bring your money and exchange it for a drink or two. And if you're worried about how to get home after one too many visits to the bar, then, for that extra festival feeling, we are also offering free camping to Canalside members if you'd like to stay overnight on the farm.

George from The Magic Pan will be cooking pancakes to order, so if you're hungry throughout the night then be sure to pay him a visit. Please also bring along puddings to share – we will be having a 'Pudding of the Year' competition again so get those creative culinary juices flowing! There will of course be a roaring fire to sit around and no doubt a bit of fire twirling to go with it.

TICKETS: £10 non-members, £8 members, £3 all under 10s. Ticket price includes a free drink from the bar (glass of cider or fruit juice only). Tickets are available from Gaia OR the growers (if you happen to see one when you're at Canalside OR please order direct from Ali at the usual email address/via her pigeonhole in the yurt, with payment.

PLEASE NOTE: we will be looking for volunteers to help with a wide range of activities - from putting up and decorating the marquees and generally preparing the site on Friday 24th/Saturday 25th September, helping serve drinks at the bar, stoking the fire, checking tickets on the door etc etc, to the big clear up on the Sunday – so if you'd like to help us out with any of these, please let Ali know a.s.a.p. Haven't done your share of work this year? What a perfect opportunity for you to contribute to the project in your own special way!! Any suggestions on how to make this year's ceilidh even better than last year are most welcome!

General Information

Canalside blog <http://canalsidecommunityfood.blogspot.com/>

This has been established for quite a while now, and I would just like to remind you of its existence!! Here you can read about local events for which I have received details, Canalside events, local job opportunities and much more. The easiest way to be informed of any updates is to 'Subscribe by email' by entering your email address in the space at the right-hand side (just below the lovely drawing of the box of veg).

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 Canalsider's..? If so, then this is the space for you!

Songlines sings for water!

8pm on Saturday **27 November** at the Spa Centre
Come along to Songlines 10th anniversary concert.

Expect everything from doo-wop to gospel, folk to African, audience participation, and more besides. Having a full house will raise significant funds towards WaterAid's work, helping some of the world's poorest communities take their first step out of poverty by providing clean, safe water.

With our passion for singing we thought dedicating this concert to WaterAid would be a great way of giving something back. We hope that people will come along, enjoy the concert and feel good about raising money for WaterAid.

Tickets at Gaia or from Felix Mindham (01926 316429) **£7 or £4 for children**



Small Ads

Do you have any business ventures you'd like to advertise to their members of Canalside? Then this is the space for you!

ROOM to let in creative cosy town centre house with lovely garden.

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Acappella Songs to Stir the Soul

a singing workshop led by Sarah Pennington and Gilo

10:30-4:30, Sat 9 Oct, Unitarian Chapel, High St, Warwick (CV34 4AX)

A harmony singing workshop featuring beautiful sacred songs from different traditions and cultures around the globe: Shape note, Taize, Iona, Harmonic Temple, simple native chants, rousing gospel, and much more.



Gilo & Sarah have been teaching together since 2002 and have built up an enthusiastic following in Dorset and far beyond. They quickly create a safe and fun atmosphere and meld a group into a community of singers for the day. **All the songs and chants on this workshop will be taught "by ear".**

Cost for the day £24 Please bring some food for a shared lunch.

For more info, ring 01926 778454, or email: bruceknight.voice@virgin.net Places are limited – our workshops normally sell out, so early booking is advised.



Need a gardener?

Call Charlie Swallow for all your gardening tasks at competitive rates.
I am a grower at Canalside and previously also worked as a gardener at Garden Organic, Ryton.

Tel. 07912 504047

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