



THE BLOSSOM IN THE ORCHARD tells us spring is most definitely here and holds the promise of an abundant harvest (if late frosts steer clear of the fragile blooms so that the fruit can set). Despite the recent dry, warm period, the chill wind reminds us that summer is a way off though. In this busy spell at the start of the season there's lots to do in the fields, polytunnels and orchard. Read all about this in *Will's News from the Land*. Alongside the busy-ness on the growing side of things, there's also lots going on to continue to improve the spaces we have and to develop new ones that are better suited to what we want to use the site for – Tom tells us all about this in *Site Developments*. Read about the



'Worcester Black' pear blossom

recent visit through the *Education Project* and find out about future opportunities to get involved, and as always there are updates from our partner projects: *The Willows* and *Canalside Community Bees*. Turn to the back for the *Small Ads* and *Members' Corner* notices – here too spring is springing with lots of energy in new ventures! I hope you're enjoying the signs of spring – do take a walk up to the orchard to enjoy the beauty there if you get a chance before blossom season is over.

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Ali, April 2015

NEWS FROM THE LAND – by Will Johnson

In the last few weeks the season has really kicked off down on the farm. You will have noticed a sudden abundance of leafy veg in the share recently. This is the 'spring glut'. We can cut some of the plants as frequently as every ten days during this period, but it does not last for long - soon all of these winter crops will stop producing leaves and go to seed, which will be good timing for clearing them out, composting them, and replacing them immediately with our summer crops of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and other exotic fruit-bearers.



Aubergines take up residence on the new hot bed

Our plant raising has been going really well so far this year. We have made a horse manure powered hot bed for the peppers and aubergines to sit in and hopefully mature faster than usual (and bear a decent amount of fruit) and already we have two batches of cucumber seedlings waiting to be planted in one of the tunnels. The asparagus has been planted outside,

at the top of Millfield where we can keep a close eye on it, and we have managed to get our maincrops of potatoes and onions into the ground on time. In the tunnels the early peas, carrots and potatoes are all above the ground now, (more or less) weed free and well on the way to being a harvest we can bank on.



Early peas in the polytunnel

Up in the orchard we have managed to get most of the mulching done, which will smother weeds and give a slow release of nutrients to the trees. We planted more gooseberries last week and started to pick rhubarb, which comes at a handy time when the veg is going through its lean period during May and June.



The first rhubarb harvest of the year

We'd have hoped to have more squash to share out at this time of year but it has not stored well this winter for some reason and it is now finished.

It has happened quickly, but it suddenly feels very, very busy on the site at the moment and after a chilled out winter I feel the need to knuckle down and get on with stuff. I'm writing this on Sunday morning and will go to the site for a few hours today to get some ground turned over, so that we can get planting first thing Monday morning. I really enjoy the seasonality of the work (when it's cold and dark there's no urgency to work; when the days are long and sunny and you want to be outside anyway it is when all the work needs doing!) and I hope you are enjoying the seasonality of the produce as much as we are.

Our refurbished muck-spreader has been well used to get several tonnes of cow manure and municipal green waste onto the land to increase fertility, optimise water retention and encourage biodiversity (among many other things), and the new plough has meant the CSA has a bit more independence (and therefore flexibility) from Leasowe Farm, which is working well for both. Our first batches of lettuce, rocket, radish and broad beans are all growing well on Canalside field, though they may need a drop of water if this dry weather continues.



The muck spreader in action - protective eye- and ear-wear are essential!

It is set to be a typical 'hungry gap' for the next six weeks or so but we are working on getting more crops in that period for the future. As well as the asparagus (you'll have to wait a couple of years for that though!) and the rhubarb, we have planted an earlier batch of broad beans in one of the tunnels to see how early we can get those.

Will, 19 April 2015

NEW ARRIVALS...

It's been a busy time for the Canalside stork again! We have 3 small arrivals to welcome this time – here's some news from their parents:

First on the scene was a son for members, *Mike and Vanessa Wakeford*:

Jack Anthony Wakeford was born on 31st January, weighing in at 6lb10oz. Mother and baby did fantastically well and are growing stronger every day. He has already been wearing babygrows with vegetables on! Soon he'll be crawling in the mud with the rest of us!



Jack Wakeford



Leo Etheridge

In mid-March, *Dan and Alice Yaxley* welcomed Noah into the world – a baby brother for 7-year old Edith, who is enjoying helping with baby care. He's already thriving, having gained 1kg on his birth weight in the first month!

Leo Peter arrived at 4.44am on Saturday 4 April. Leo is a first child for *David and Alice Etheridge* and they're enjoying these early days getting to know each other and getting used to their new life.

May these babies flourish and be nurtured by their place in the Canalside community.

We also have a number of new full sized arrivals to welcome into membership of Canalside:

- *James & Emily Walters and family* • *Matthew Cotton & Jenny Campbell and family*
- *Laura Fuller* • *Perdita Javadi-Babreh and family* • *Geraldine Viveier* • *Annie McClusky* •
- *Charlotte Vernon and family* • *Michael & Cassandra Linforth and family* •
- *Lizzy Whitehead and family* • *Helga Weirather and family*

We hope these new members are enjoying the share as it evolves from its winter guise through its spring face towards its summer form.

SITE DEVELOPMENTS – by Tom Ingall

It's all starting to shape up on site as I write this.

After five plus years of loyal service our geodome has finally reached the end of it's time and this week we began emptying it ready for its deconstruction. It's exciting to think of the transformation that will occur when we get this space clear and grass re-established. It will open up a lovely entrance and view through to the Willows Project that has been hidden since its inception two years ago. The function of



The new 'staff room' is moved into place

geodome will now be served partly by the arrival of a (purple!) caravan which will be our 'staff room' and also through the new 'community space' in the pole barn. Inside the pole barn you'll have hopefully seen new boards and signs that have been put up, as well as a work surface and sink next to the seating area. We really hope you'll all enjoy using this space to relax and enjoy a cuppa whilst collecting your share or when you've been down at the farm to volunteer or simply to go for walk or have a picnic!

Next to arrive in time for the summer events will be the railway carriage kitchen, a project that has been in the pipeline for quite a while!! We're also looking to extend and improve on the play area on site with the addition of large logs and tractor tyres to play on and explore. If you've any suggestions or ideas for any of these developments, or would like to be involved in making them happen, then please do get in touch.

EDUCATION PROJECT – by Ali Jeffery

The season has started for the education project with a visit from the Reception class from Cropredy school in Oxfordshire, where member Mike Wakeford teaches and is working to establish a CSA. He accompanied the class with their class teachers for a game to learn what helps the vegetables to grow and which pests they are at risk from, followed by a tour to see how the growers protect the crops from the greedy rabbits, pigeons and other animals that love to make their dinner from our vegetables.



A game to find out what helps the vegetable plants to grow



Naming some of the pests that eat the plants

Finally the children looked at compost and found some of the creatures that help to make compost and thus enrich the soil. Thank you to the members, and Valerie Meehan from Food for Life, who helped with the visit – the visits are only possible in their present format with the valuable input of members: I am very grateful for their help in preparing the site and delivering the sessions, the children have more adults they can talk to about their experiences and the school staff and adult helpers appreciate a hot drink mid-morning.

Another visit is in the pipeline for later in the summer, and I hope to be able to confirm details of this visit soon and send out information. If you are interested in helping out with future visits, please look out for emails when dates are finalised.

You may be thinking you'd like your child's class, Scout/Guide/Cub/Brownie group, youth club or any other group they are part of to visit the farm. There are fliers in the collection space that you can pass onto the class teacher or adult leaders, and there is plenty of availability for visits in the remainder of the summer and up until the end of October.

EVENTS – by Ali Jeffery

Socials have continued on a monthly basis, with opportunities to help in the fields, to learn about new ways to use the produce and to get to know others in our community of Canalside members. We hope you have enjoyed one or more of these, and if not, we look forward to seeing you at a social event in the coming (warmer) months.

February – fermented veg workshop:

Member and fermented food fan, Erica Moody, ran another workshop on preserving vegetables through fermentation. This time she showed the group how to make kimchi, as well as revisiting vegetable ferments from previous workshops, including single vegetable pickles and sauerkraut.

March – the Big Spring Work Task – onion planting and shared meal:

Members (and visiting relatives) of all ages joined in with the onion planting at the end of March, with the younger ones also helping out with painting some new chalk boards which will be used in the collection space. Thank you to everyone who came to help with this important and big task in late March and early April. As there is still plenty of beetroot in the clamp even now, the lunch which followed of course included beetroot soup, and a hearty mixed veg soup using all the winter roots.



Onion planting team



Painting the chalk boards



April – blossom walk and tea in the orchard:

The promised rain didn't materialise, meaning we had beautiful sunshine for enjoying the orchard blossom. The fire took the edge off the chill wind and hot drinks warmed from inside with some tasty home-baking to go with them.

If you didn't have time to go up to the orchard that day, you are welcome to go any time to see how the trees are doing. The blossom will continue for a while, since only the plum trees have finished flowering. The cherry and pear



Orchard rhubarb and blossom joy!

blossoms are looking really great now, and the apple blossom will follow, hopefully filling the orchard with their delicate scent. All the trees are labelled, so you can know what type of fruit and which variety you are looking at. If you're not



'Kidd's Orange Red' apple blossom buds



Some of the blossom walkers, including one of the youngest to come and enjoy the orchard!

sure how to get to the orchard, use the map on the wall of the collection space, or in the members' information pack that hangs in the collection space.

CANALSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD - PARTNER PROJECTS' UPDATE

Canalside Community Bees, by Kath Pasteur

We Need a Keen Bee!!!

Another year of beekeeping is just getting going as the weather warms up. Sadly we have lost three hives over the winter, and we are not sure of the reason. Those remaining are a bit weak but they have plenty of food and the rape is already starting to flower, so here's hoping they get strong quickly.

As a group we are also struggling somewhat to manage the hives due to a lack of skilled beekeepers. Tragically, one of our core beekeepers,

Dinah, has become allergic to bee stings and so cannot play a role in the apiary any more. This leaves only one skilled beekeeper in the group. So, we are looking for new or existing members to come forward who would be interested in taking a more active role in managing the bees. You would learn all the necessary skills on the job and training opportunities are also available. Do let us know if you are interested by emailing us on canalsidecommunitybees@yahoo.co.uk.

The May meeting will not involve any work in the apiary due to the above problem. Hopefully some activity will go ahead though maybe not on the date advertised (it's bank holiday and people are away!). Watch your email or the Canalside weekly update for further news.

The Willows Care Farm, by Sybil Roberson and Verity Thompson

Our regular Wednesday group has been busy helping the Canalside work mornings with weeding, planting asparagus and digging carrots. The group finds the connection to nature, land and sky really empowering – and we always seems to be accompanied by the song of the skylarks, the visiting blue tit family and a hungry robin or two. We even saw a hare race across the field last week. The Wednesday group has constructed a new raised bed and planted



Hiving a swarm last May

coloured willows, and of course they have been busy with the enterprise project too. We've been selling products from the enterprise project in the Pole Barn and in Gaia – thanks again to everyone who has supported us. We're currently working on bird feeders, painted slates and wooden seed markers – these will be coming soon to a Pole Barn near you! We've also planted lots of seeds for our flower garden, and will be selling packets of organic calendula seeds, grown and harvested on site.

We've been able to offer paid work to our volunteer, Sara, who has been very dedicated in supporting the Wednesday group and developing the enterprise project – and it's great that we can finally pay her!!

We also have two new funded projects coming up over the summer:

The "What can Nature do for you?" project will see us working in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Foundry Wood to offer healthy-eating, nature-based and outdoor activities for young families and excluded young people.

We are also developing a 10-week Summer Skills programme for adults, sharing the therapeutic benefits of food growing, craft sessions and nature-based activities.

Thank you again to everyone who's supported the project.

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.

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FOOD UNION is a new organisation based in Coventry aimed at tackling **food poverty**. Over the next few months we will be setting up a community garden, running a café with local produce, and strengthening ties with local projects.



Want to know more? Email: chris.maughan@coventry.gov.uk or visit timetodigestcoventry.wordpress.com.

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MY VISION - to co-create community; each with our own front door, working together, creating shared resources, beauty, and a loving environment. There's a sweat lodge and complementary health care as first resource, not last resort. A place where we care for each other, and, keep our own space. A place of emotional intelligence and maturity, spiritual awareness and respect. If you are genuinely interested contact me on Debbie@phonecoop.coop or **07960 040985**. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

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POP-UP DEATH CAFÉ

On a narrowboat!

Saturday, 13th June, 2015, 2.30 to 4.30 at Grand Union Wharf, Leamington Spa (exact location confirmed to those who book a place).

Join end-of-life researcher and author, Sue Brayne, and acupuncturist/counsellor, Debbie Collins, for a conversation about death, dying and end-of-life over a cup of tea and piece of cake.

To book a place email Sue at sue.brayne@gmail.com or call 07729 468289.

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Do you know any fruit / vegetable / farm themed jokes?

Workshare Andy Forbes would like to put together a printed leaflet to put in the collection space for members' enjoyment. Please email your contributions to: andrewdforbes@outlook.com

MEMBERS' CORNER (continued)

The Peace Festival team are now recruiting volunteers to help at this year's event on 13th & 14th June. Volunteer roles include recycling & litter-picking, helping on the gate, handing out programmes, manning the information tent, assisting with some of the workshop tents and much more! We need volunteers who are flexible, reliable and responsible - with a sense of humour! Please contact volunteers@peacefestival.org.uk for more details



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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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WOMEN'S WILD NOURISHMENT

A retreat in nature for women!

Friday, 2nd July to Sunday, 4th July, 2015

At Seren Retreat on the Gower Peninsula
(www.serenretreat.com).

With Debbie Collins and Liz Terry, two highly experienced facilitators.

Places are limited to 12 so book before 15th May for £215 (£245 after that), all food included.

For more information see www.pathwaystoventures.weebly.com, or e-mail Liz on liz.voices4all@gmail.com, or call her on 07810 290910.

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FOR SALE – all in very good condition:

Rhode Gear rear-mounted child's bike seat - £15

Frontier Cruiser backpack child carrier - £10

BebeConfort navy blue travel cot - £15

Peter Storm child's walking boots – hardly worn – size 2 - £8

Large metal fire guard - £5

Contact Jo Wheeler: 01926 330299

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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 July 2015.

Deadline for ads with payment, and notices – Sunday 19th July.

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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

Timberlust:

handcrafted farm crate furniture

If you want to buy a gift or furnish your home or retail space with furniture and art designs that exude natural character, browse the Timberlust shop for unique pieces



handcrafted from vintage farm crates, wooden pallets and upcycled from other reclaimed industrial wood and metal, or commission something to suit your needs.

Ben Cowan, a Canalside worksharer and steering group member, makes those items you can see on the www.timberlust.co.uk site at his Leamington workshop.

Commissions/sales: 07725 199861