



Canalside Community Food
a community supported agriculture scheme

SUMMER 2011

newsletter no. 20

IT'S HOLIDAY SEASON! Welcome to this very summery issue of the newsletter – perhaps a little holiday reading for you! It's been a very busy three months on the project since the last newsletter: not only have the growers had the usual busy time planting up for the season ahead (read all about this and much more in *News from the Field*), but the **Fruit Field** has started producing enough fruit to sell small quantities to members through the yurt, the **Education Project** has had two visits from local schools, and we've had our usual annual success with our stall at the **Peace Festival** as well as the annual **Canalside Barn dance** – a beautiful balmy summer's evening of dancing and enjoyment! There's more about all these areas of the project below. We've also been busy with **Site Developments**, as anyone who has visited the project in the last few weeks will have noticed – read Tom's account of all the hard work behind the new structures. And go right to the back for the usual **Members Corner and Small Ads**.

Happy Holidays, if you're getting one, and happy reading! Ali

NEWS FROM THE FIELD – by Abbie and Will

We've finished all of the major planting jobs for the season and, with our summer crops coming on, have been starting to harvest tomatoes, courgettes and French beans in the last few weeks. We've finished our radishes and peas for the year – a bumper crop from the peas (and we



Will using the new potato lifter to lift some of the early new potatoes

might space them out a bit next time, as there was quite a jungle theme to Tuesday and Friday mornings) – and are just coming to the end of the equally abundant broad beans. We're pleased with the new potatoes, having tried a new variety this year and had really positive feedback.

All of our tunnel crops are infested with white fly - a pest that we imported from Ryton where we rent space in the heated greenhouse to start off some of our earlier seedlings. Thankfully, white fly doesn't do nearly as much damage as green aphids, so we're not too worried, although time spent managing the problem adds up. This is one of the drawbacks of using off site

propagation facilities, and although it hasn't done significant harm this year, is something to consider as we plan for future seasons.

Some mammoth planting days over the last few weeks (one or two dawn till dusk, culminating in the twisted wet field pigeon mesh workout) have meant that the planting plan is on track. A big thank you to everyone who helped with the leeks and cauliflowers in the pouring rain; they were the last two big jobs and we couldn't have done them without you.

A rabbit fencing repair effort, as well as the enthusiastic participation in rabbit management by the farm dogs, have prevented a potential free-for-all for the local rabbit population, whilst the new track in Mill Field and the bridge between there and Big Gorse have made the haulage element of a lot of our jobs much quicker and easier.

One piece of bad news regards the sweetcorn, all of which is unwell with the same mystery disease. Although we planted it in succession (meaning that each bed has had varying



The Canalside banner on its annual outing to the Peace Festival

amounts of water), sowed half of it direct and transplanted the other half (a planting experiment), we find that all the plants are consistent in their symptoms. We're not sure what the problem is, but after some research think it is possibly frit fly which lays its eggs in the main hollow stem, or less likely, a bacterial infection called Stewart's Wilt. Sad to say, we're not holding out much hope for the harvest.

Mid-summer in the field is a time for acres of weeding, but also a time to look ahead to the winter: to order seeds for the crops we'll want to be harvesting then and to start to plan how we'll use the space for next year's vegetables. Many thanks to all who have helped us through this busy time, we look forward to seeing you in the field again soon.

NEW ARRIVALS...

With the start of summer and the increased workload in the fields, we welcome *Amy Willoughby* back as a workshare for the summer. I know the growers are really appreciating the extra help she gives every Saturday!

Veg member, *Linda Palmer*, has also taken up a workshare space, initially for the summer while Liz and Blair Allen take a break from their weekly workshare commitment. Linda has been a Canalside veg share member for two and a half years now, and loves the concept of community cooperative growing to provide organic produce. She told me that she had had her name on the workshare waiting list for a while, and was really keen to take up the workshare space – she sees it as a great way of making her come and work in the fields. She's loving the workshare experience, especially as an opportunity to be involved in what she described as 'a sociable way to grow, pick and distribute food'. She's also enjoying the physical workout and being out in the open. She says she feels virtuous about working for her share – something I'm sure a number of our workshares will relate to; I certainly did when I was a workshare! She highly recommends volunteering in the fields, or going on the workshare waiting list to take a regular volunteering role in the project. When not at Canalside, she is involved with another local food project – South Warwickshire Local Foods' food coop, working on the admin and promotion, and also with packing and distribution of bags which often include surplus veg bought from Canalside!



Amy helping with construction of the tree-bog

GENERAL INFORMATION

We've made huge strides recently in recruiting new members to take up the spare veg shares of members who have sadly had to leave the project in the past year. However, we're still below the number of shares we're growing for! The veg isn't going to waste as we are mostly able to sell the excess to local shops and businesses. But wouldn't it be wonderful if we could achieve our target number of veg members before the winter? Can you help us to recruit another 10 veg members?

Maybe you have a friend or neighbour who has been saying they'll sign up for months. Why not pick up a subscription pack from the blue folder in the yurt? Or ask them if you can give me their email address so that I can email them everything they need to start getting veg from us!

Maybe you haven't delivered any fliers to your street. Why not grab a handful next time you go up for your veg share or for a work morning?

Maybe you know someone who might like to check us out with a 4-week trial – the perfect way to find out if the scheme will suit their eating habits and lifestyle. Why not give them a flier?

FRUIT FIELD – by Gareth Davies

The orchard on the farm is now looking good thanks to everyone's hard work getting it planted,

weeded and mulched! Currently the trees are growing well and we are beginning to harvest some soft fruit. You will have noticed some rhubarb in your veg share and also currants and raspberries on sale when you pick up your veg. We have also picked local cherries (thanks to a member!) and cherry plums for sale. All money raised this way is put back into the orchard to supplement the lottery local food grant that we have obtained to establish the Fruit CSA.

We are now looking to start selling fruit shares (in the same way that we sell veg shares) from mid-August, which will help to get the enterprise going. Our own trees, however, will not begin to bear a lot of fruit for a few years yet! To that end we would like to get going by collecting any excess fruit from trees owned by you, our members (or your neighbours!).

The basic idea is that we will help harvest the fruit, leave a portion with you and then use the rest to help make up fruit shares which we will offer to the wider membership as shares. In return we will undertake to give you advice in caring for the shrubs or trees that we use and will give help and training in pruning and other tasks. Any fruit will do – apples, pears, plums, cherries etc – and we are also interested if you have a source of soft fruit (blackberries, currants etc) as well.

So if you are interested in donating fruit get in touch (you can take a small flier with contact details from the yurt). If you know of anyone who has a number of trees and doesn't know what to do with all the fruit, let us know as well and we will contact them to discuss the possibility of donating it. It would be good to have a wide a range of fruit varieties as possible as they all have different qualities and keeping abilities.

Fruit Shares!

We would also like to hear from you if you would be interested in taking a fruit share as a supplement to your Canalside veg share between late August and the end of November. You would pick this up like the veg and it will cost £20 per month for the three months (i.e. £60). Additional shares can be ordered for the weeks between August 9th and 28th at a rate of £5 per week, priced according to when you start.

For the share we plan to provide a weekly share of one, two or three types of fruit, depending on availability, which will mainly be late summer/autumn fruit (apples, pears, damsons, plums etc). The scheme will depend on us getting adequate fruit donations to offer value for money but in case we can't always manage this we will offer you an appropriate discount should you wish to take up a regular fruit share next year (or a refund). Look on it as 'seed' funding for our fruit orchard!

We will in any case offer fruit shares from next year with the soft fruit starting with rhubarb in the late spring, so keep in touch with the project.

If you would like to get more information about the fruit CSA please get in touch. Contact **Gareth** on email at fiona@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk or by phone on **01926 883161 / 07717283953**.

If you would like a fruit share contact Gareth or Ali on mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk.

Partially funded by:



SITE DEVELOPMENTS – by Tom Ingall

So the site keeps on growing, we just don't seem to be able to help ourselves this year! It's so satisfying to start to put some permanent structures up around the site.



The tree-bog – construction well underway!

Hopefully the majority of you will have seen the developments and have taken a wander down to investigate the new 'Tree-bog' toilet and pole barn next door. Both were put up collaboratively with members help and really add a huge amount to the versatility of the site for everyone. We were very grateful to Fred Miller for facilitating the tree-bog workshop in late May. The saga of the Canalside loo has been a long one but I think you'll agree it was well worth the wait to end up with such a beautiful, functional structure. We now have two large composting toilets that need very little maintenance and that can cope with our larger events, as the recent Barn Dance proved.

Which brings me on to the second big change of the last month or two: our beautiful new pole barn, which was christened so aptly at this year's Barn Dance. Amazingly this barn was entirely built over just 1 and half days with the help of a large team of Canalside volunteers. The larch poles were sourced locally, generously donated through the council's forestry department and the roof is second hand tin. Many thanks to Dan Britton and Kath Pasteur for all their help in facilitating this weekend and helping to put up a successful building over such a short period



Raising the barn!



The completed barn

of time. The barn was constructed with the aim of becoming the Canalside 'field kitchen' and our next workshop will be concerned with installing an earth oven inside it. However, as those who attended the Barn dance will have seen, it's a multi functional building that provides us with a large covered space under which we can now do many different activities. Once again many thanks to all those who came and helped with the construction of either of these two new projects.

Looking forward to the next steps we will be adding to the barn gradually, starting with the earth oven over the weekend of 5th/6th August (come and join the fun!). Then we'd like to re-position the geodome so the social area can be opened up and a design can start to be put together for the remaining space. This will be on a permaculture basis, with opportunities to be involved this coming autumn and winter in the design and planting.

SOCIALS – by Caz Ingall

Recent socials

Hello fine people! As promised, here are a couple of brilliant pictures from the barn dance. Didn't the site look amazing? The Warwick Folk Band lived up to our memories of our first ceilidh and played 2 fantastic sets, with almost everyone seeming to get up and have a reel or two. The bar was staffed by and indeed propped up by many marvellous folk, the fire stoked



Before dark, with the completed tree-bog on the left

by adults and children alike and the general

atmosphere kept light, bubbly and immensely happy by everyone who came. And... we managed to raise over £1,000 for our Education Project, breaking all previous fundraising efforts by a lot. Amazing! THANK YOU to everyone who attended - I was saying to Tom that although we can provide both the space and the opportunity itself, the success of the evening is purely down to who comes and what energy they bring with them. Another massive thank you to all those who helped



After dark, lit by all those beautiful lights!

with the numerous jobs that needed doing pre, during and post the party - without you these things just wouldn't be possible. And a HUGE thank you to George and Fan who cooked non-stop for over 6 hours producing pancake after delicious pancake - you two are truly amazing and a very great blessing to Canalside.

I have said this before (but I will say it again!), I am always filled with an enormous sense of well being after successful events such as these - the coming together of so many brilliant people in one space to create a truly great community event is just so heartwarming. Long may we continue to build all this together!

Anyway... enough gushing. Here's a brief word about some *upcoming events* (put them in your diary quick!!):

Saturday 6th/Sunday 7th August - Earth Oven weekend - Dan Britton will be leading this weekend workshop to install our very own bread oven in the pole barn, using clay earth from the farm. This will serve as the hub of our new field kitchen and a place to cook and eat together at all future events. Days will run from 10am onwards on both days and will be suitable for all ages. More info nearer the time, but PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COME!

Friday 16th - Sunday 18th September - Canalside craft and camping weekend - as you'll be aware, we've been planning on Saturday 17th September being our Autumn social, and due to popular demand we'd decided to do this as an afternoon/evening thing. But... due to feedback after the barn dance and other ideas we've been hatching we're now really excited to offer a *whole weekend* of camping and craft activities in its place. Our thoughts are still very much developing, and we're hoping it'll generally all happen as a brilliant group effort, but it could look a little bit like this:

Friday p.m. - arrive to set up your camps

- spend an evening cooking, eating and relaxing round the fire

Saturday a.m. - Potato Harvest

p.m. - Potato Harvest OR alternative craft activities (definitely to include willow lantern making for an evening parade)

evening - making and cooking pizzas in our lovely new earth oven

- Canalside Cabaret - an evening of open mic wonderment around the fire

Sunday a.m/p.m - Craft and other activities* - could include things such as:

green woodworking ★ wild food foraging ★ spinning ★ paper making ★ willow sculpture
storytelling ★ poetry ★ cooking and baking ★ sports and games

(*We may well have to ask for small contributions to the different workshops/activities just to cover costs, but we will aim to keep these very low).

DO YOU HAVE ANY SKILLS OR ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE OVER THE WEEKEND? LET ME KNOW!!

Saturday 26th November - Winter social - including garlic planting work activity.

As always, offers of help and any ideas you may want to share for these or any other events are very welcome - please contact me directly on cazingall@gmail.com

That's it for now folks. I really look forward to seeing you soon.

Bright summer blessings to you all, Caz x

EDUCATION PROJECT – *by Ali Jeffery*

The last week of May saw the culmination of months of planning, resourcing, making and general preparation for the education project. We had a full day visit from the Year 3/4 class from Our Lady and St Teresa's Primary in Cubbington, and a half day visit from the Reception class in Radford Semele. Despite strong winds and, on the Thursday, persistent rain the children had fun learning about different



Radford children decide what can be composted

aspects of vegetable growing. Here *Angela Phillips*, who volunteered during the first visit, recounts her day with the children:



What do plants need to grow? with Radford Primary's Reception children

“Are the toilets **really** different here? Our teacher’s told us they don’t have water in!!”

This was my greeting and first important question of the day as year 3/4 from Our Lady’s & St. Teresa’s Primary School gambolled down from the coach for the May 23rd workshop at Canalside. The child awaited my answer, trepidation all over his face. “Yes, I said, they don’t flush but no need to worry, Miss Jeffery is going to explain how it all works – you’ll be fine”. He looked intrigued and just a little excited. Ali got the day off to a start with an introduction to the site which, to everyone’s relief, included the all important toilet and hand washing instructions.

The wind was up, and the first activity took place in the shelter of the empty polytunnel. Some children were transformed with petals, woolly hats and mitts into flower parts, whilst others donned the stripy bee t-shirts. Pollination came to life as bees visited flowers collecting and redistributing sticky pollen balls about via bodies, heads and hands. This lively session set the tone for the day and introduced the theme for the workshop: **How does our garden grow?**

After snack time it was off to the bottom of Big Gorse to sow runner beans into pots and to plant out courgette plants. Lucy led the courgette planting in the beds and we volunteers helped with a carousel of potting activities. All the children had the opportunity to plant beans and to compose care instruction leaflets to take back with their pots. Planting out the courgettes took a little time; all children had a turn and loved it. Comments made included “I’ve never ever been out in the middle of a windy field like this before it’s just sooo fun!” One conscientious young grower asked “Will I see **my** courgette when I come back in October?” “I’m sure it will be out there somewhere I replied”.

The story of compost followed a lunch break. The children literally got stuck in to identify the ‘mini-beasts’ in trays of compost. Feedback was enthusiastic and competitive (our group found eight different creatures!). This session led nicely into the final activity whereby the children went on a hunt to seek and sort out items that are compostable, recyclable or rubbish. A review session rounded off the day and visitors left around 2.30 keeping their beans safe to nurture back at school.



Year 3/4 from Our Lady & St. Teresa's Primary hunting for the creatures that compost

Thanks to all Ali’s meticulous planning, preparation and attention to detail, it proved a most enjoyable day for everyone.

As the group gathered their belongings to leave I asked a young lad what he had liked best about the day. Without hesitation he replied, “The cool loos of course!”



Using an identification key

Thanks, Angela, for that lively and informative account. Both classes will return to the project in October, once they have settled in with their new class teacher, to learn more about vegetables around the theme 'Where does it come from?' I'll be crossing my fingers for better weather, and will be in touch nearer the time about helping out with the visits, or the preparation for them, once the visit dates have been confirmed by the schools.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Lots of people have been getting stuck in to the running of our project over the past few months. There are a whole host of ways that people have chosen to help out, and whatever the task, it is all contributing to the success of our not-for-profit venture! If you're a bit unsure about how you can help out, have a look at the myriad ways in which people have been involved since the last newsletter:

First, and mostly importantly, at the bi-weekly work mornings out in the field assisting with the prime job of growing veg: weeding ★ planting out ★ harvesting ★ maintaining the site

But also: making resources for the education project visits ★ delivering fliers ★ constructing the tree bog ★ preparing the site for the education project visits ★ helping out during the classes' visits ★ manning the Peace Festival stall ★ putting up the pole barn ★ preparing the site for the barn dance ★ helping on the bar or door at the barn dance ★ clearing up after the barn dance

And don't forget, all this can count towards your time supporting the project – just record your time contribution in the black A4 volunteer work log which is always in the yurt.

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.

★ ★ ★



Are you considering installing photovoltaic solar panels? Snitterfield Actioning Climate Change (SACC) is a volunteer run community group and we are running the Snitterfield Community Solar Programme.

In partnership with the Energy Saving Trust, we have selected an accredited solar installer who is offering our group a bulk purchase discount on solar installations. Several installations have already been completed with a further 15 in the pipeline.

For more information or to arrange a 'no obligation' discounted quote from a reputable firm please contact SACC through our website www.snitterfieldacc.org or telephone us on 01789 731348.

★ ★ ★

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 placing an advert in future newsletters.

★ ★ ★

HOUSEHOLD & GARDEN MAINTENANCE



Household and Garden Maintenance

Painting, flat pack furniture assembly

Lawn mowing and edging, hedge cutting, weeding and garden clearance

Graham Williams 01926 431129
email: grahamwilliams3@btinternet.com

★ ★ ★

See over for more small ads

★ ★ ★

☆☆☆

Forest Schools use the calmness and space of woodland to help children grow socially and emotionally while doing exciting, risky, activities safely.

There are now sessions in Leamington and Warwick.

For more information contact the forest school practitioner,
Keir Mitchell: 0781 3934597 / keirmitchell@yahoo.co.uk.

☆☆☆

NEED ANY SEWING DONE ?

Curtains made or altered. Upholstery, repairs and alterations undertaken.

For a fab job done at good rates call

LIZ ALLAN

on **07761142661**

to discuss your requirements.

☆☆☆

The Centre for Agroecology and Food Security (CAFS), the new joint research initiative of Coventry University and Garden Organic, is **recruiting a part time Research Support Officer** to provide administrative and research support to promote the further development of the Centre. For further details, please see:

<http://wwwm.coventry.ac.uk/hr/Pages/jobvacancies.aspx#jobs>

or contact Human Resources at futures.hr@coventry.ac.uk or tel 02476 888201

☆☆☆



SouthTownDigital
Fast affordable print & design
price calculator >>> www.southtowndigital.com
500 A5 Flyers for just £39!
1000 Business Cards for only £79!
01926 886863
37a Clemens St. L Spa, CV31 2DP

☆☆☆☆☆

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