



**WE'RE ALREADY IN HIGH SUMMER AND HOLIDAY SEASON.** *It certainly feels*



*The aubergines are fattening up*

*like both of these this year, and we're seeing prolonged hot summer weather building on our early and unseasonably warm spring. This makes a pleasant change from wet British summer which seem more common. There are, however, effects on the veg and fruit – read this issue's **New from the Veg Field** from Will and **Update from the Fruit Orchard** from Gareth to learn more about these and what is happening more generally in both. It's been a busy time on the events front – if you haven't made it along to any of the recent activities, read about them in **Events** and see what there is coming up in the remainder of the year to get involved with. With number of new trials underway from the Peace Festival and through the website, our veg subscription numbers are looking healthy. I hope you've had an opportunity to introduce yourself to a new face if you've been up collecting your veg share recently. There are also the regular updates about **Site Developments** and the **Education Project** as well as news from our partner projects: **Canalside Community Bees** and **The Willows Care Farm**. If you're going away during the remainder*

*of the summer I wish you safe travels, and if you're not straying far I hope you have time to get out and enjoy the dry weather while it lasts – today's downpour may herald the start of a change, but hopefully that's not the last of the sunny days!*

*Ali, July 2014*

**NEWS FROM THE VEG FIELD – by Will Johnson**

The season is flying by, but perhaps it seems to be going quicker than usual because everything seems to be happening earlier than usual.

The upside to this is that it's only the middle of July and we have already finished planting all the main crops for the year. Just this week we finished the epic bare-root leek transplanting job (about 15,000 of those) and Paul and I spent the hottest day of the year putting 4000 cauliflowers in the ground. Rain was forecast that night so it seemed an opportunity to save ourselves the task of watering them in (it was important to remember this as we sweated it out on our hands and knees last Thursday).



*Garlic hung up to dry over the pole barn beams*

The onions seem ready to harvest (but will they store as long if they're out of the ground a month earlier than usual – I'd guess not), and the potatoes have blight already. The blight isn't a

major panic - we get it every year, just not this early – but it means we'll lose more of our crop to it than usual and this year the potatoes are growing on one of our smallest plots.

So it's not going to be a bumper year for potatoes and the slugs have done for most of our french beans, but apart from those it looks like being a very good year for all the other crops. We're set up to have winners and losers each year as it keeps us resilient and overall we'd love to be where we are now every year (well... I'd probably swap a bad crop of potatoes with celeriac or fennel if I'm completely honest).



*Tunnel sugar-snap peas flowering in early summer*

As sugar-snap peas, broad beans and tunnel carrots come to an end we welcome in an earlier than expected tomato crop. We decided to put kale in the ground a bit earlier than usual so we can have it through the summer (tell us when you're fed up with it), the cucumbers I don't need to tell you about, and the new potatoes are in small quantity but rather marvellous all the same. Have you ever seen such a yellow inside on a spud?

As mentioned above the main crops (carrots, parsnips, swede, onions, beetroot, squash – the things we grow a lot of) are all looking excellent. In the tunnels it looks as though we might actually have a good pepper year this time round and the aubergines are cropping already, slowly but surely.

What has really helped this year are some quite amazing work mornings. We regularly have ten to fifteen people, particularly on a Wednesday. In the last few weeks we have planted the entire squash crop, the leek crop, and last week in just two hours we hand-weeded the whole of the carrot crop. This is a job we usually get stressed about and can drag on for days but it's amazing what you can achieve when you get some people together who want to help, have fun and green up their hands. Here's to you all.

*Will, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2014*

## **UPDATE FROM THE FRUIT ORCHARD** – by Gareth Davies

Hopefully you are enjoying the soft fruit as high summer is with us. The strawberries were good this year but are already behind us. The other soft fruits and especially the currants (black, red and white) are continuing to yield well and the squishier raspberries and blackberries are also beginning to come on. The gooseberries on the field continue to disappoint but hopefully everyone will get a punnet's worth and we will certainly investigate the possibility of planting some gooseberry hybrids like Jostaberries that we have seen yielding well in other places this year.

The top fruit (plums, apples and pears) are doing well and we have thinned a lot of fruit from some trees in order to balance their production over future years. Unfortunately the cherries continue to suffer generally and from birds in particular but hopefully they will pull through with some tender loving care. We have also spend a lot



*High summer looking across the fruit orchard*



of time experimenting with various ways of providing a groundcover layer to the orchard which will hopefully help reduce the amount of management that might be needed in the future and this has given parts of the orchard far more of a 'permaculture' feel. If you have time, come



*Summer's fruity abundance*



*The fruit trolley, kindly made by Richard Williams, which helps to transport the fruit relatively unscathed along the bumpy track*

up to the orchard and see what is growing (the trees and bushes are all now labelled).

We currently have three workshares working in the orchard and providing valuable help in this busy harvesting period. We also have a number of tasks lined up linked to installing and managing the groundcover so if you are interested look out for the work days that we are organising. Details are in the weekly update and in the events section of this newsletter. We are also organising a fruit session for the 19<sup>th</sup> August in which we will pick any surplus fruit from around the orchard and make jam or other preserves. Ali sent an email with full details of this recently, so reply to that or look at the details in the events section and email Ali to book your place.

If you are interested in fruit why not take a fruit supplement to complement your veg share? It is currently £6 per week or £25 per month. If you would like a share, ask Ali for a form and details for changing your standing order.

*Gareth, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014*

## **NEW ARRIVALS...**

We welcome into the Canalside community, baby **Michael Robert** who arrived Earthside on 17<sup>th</sup> May. His mum, member **Helen Flanagan** told me that as soon as he can have solids he'll be tucking into veg from the farm. We look forward to seeing him thrive on our delicious veggies!

We also have a number of larger people who are newly arrived at Canalside, and we welcome as members the following people:

***Agnes Ashbell and family** · **Karen Outhwaite and family** · **Nikki Cooper & Steve Rush** · **Gabriel Teodoreanu** · **Clare Ollerenshaw & Steve Baxter** · **Petra Duškova** · **Jennie Aird***

And finally we have one new workshare to welcome to the team. **Magali Fowler**, who is a long-standing member of Canalside, has joined Team Fruit to work in the fruit orchard every week. The extra help she is giving is much appreciated at this fruitful time of year!

## **SITE DEVELOPMENTS** – *by Ali Jeffery*

The main task that has been completed in the past few months is the rendering of the straw-bale wall that separates the collection space from the rest of the pole barn. This has been in the pipeline since the space was completed last summer, but needed weather warm enough to dry out the render thoroughly once it was applied, hence needing to wait for summer to be here.



*Preparing the render*

Now that the priming render, a sloppy mix of clay and straw, has been applied, a second coat of render, of a thicker consistency, will need applying to give a smoother finish. The render should protect the wall from pests and loss of material through use of the space. Thanks to everyone who came down and got stuck into this mucky job!

As high season is a busy time all round on the farm, both in the fruit and veg fields, and in the wider farm with the arable crops, other infrastructure jobs will wait until things quieten down again. Projects we are currently discussing in the steering group are how to improve our kitchen facilities for community events and how to store water for irrigation. Watch this space for more developments.

## **EDUCATION PROJECT – by Ali Jeffery**

We have had a couple of visits to the farm through the education project this summer. For the first time, children from Lillington Primary's Year 3 class came to learn about what vegetable plants need to grow, linking in with their 'Plants' topic. For many it was their first time on a farm, despite living not so far away, and the visit provoked a lot of discussion on their return to school. Many thanks to all the



*I've found a worm!*

members who volunteered to help enrich the children's experiences during their visit.

More recently I led a visit with a small group of Guides from Dale Street Guides. They had a tour of the farm (as required by our funding) and took part in a few different tasks to give service, helping to weed as well as cutting the tops off the harvested onions. We finished with a game to demonstrate the interdependence of organisms within an eco-system and the effects of applying chemicals for pest or weed control.



*A game to learn about pests and what plants need to grow*

There are school visits looking likely for the autumn term – if you're interested in helping out, your assistance will be invaluable: the autumn visits are when we like to offer the children tastes of the vegetables they will see growing and have an opportunity to handle, and this means a lot of preparation work. Look out for details when dates have been confirmed and let me know if you are able to help. And as always, if your child or grandchild's school might be interested in a free visit to learn about how vegetables are grown, to learn about organic farming or to find out about seasonality, take a flier from the collection space to pass on to their teacher.

## **EVENTS – by Ali Jeffery**

The season is flying by and since our last newsletter there have been several events at the farm



(and away as well). June was a particularly busy month by all accounts!

### May – fermented veg workshop:

There was quite a lot of interest in the workshop run by Canalside member, Erica Moody, in collaboration with



Action 21's 'Skillshare' programme. This was open to members and non-members. Everyone who attended went home with a variety of vegetables that were all set to ferment, including beetroot and mixed vegetables. Thank you to Erica for offering to run this event.

### June – rendering the straw-bale wall:

A handful of people got really messy with mixing up the render and applying it to the straw-bale wall in the pole barn. Word is that during the collection time there were at least as many people watching the work as there were getting their hands and feet covered in the render! The task was not fully completed due to a robin's nest being discovered in one corner, although of course the chicks had fledged long before the summer party date when we needed that corner for the band! At a future time, an additional layer will be applied to give a smoother finish to the whole wall.

### Peace Festival publicity stall:

We had a lovely sunny weekend for selling veg plants and telling people about our great scheme. There was considerable interest from visitors to our stall and an incredible 9 households signed up to our special offer veg share trial that was offered at the stall. Thank you to all of you who signed up to help on the stall. For another similar opportunity, look out for the sign-up sheet for our publicity stall at Leamington Food & Drink Festival – I'll be putting this up in the collection space from mid-August.

### open day at Canalside:

In contrast to the weekend of the Peace Festival, the site received a thorough dousing during our open day. Although this might have put some prospective visitors off, there were enough people to run 3 tours of the site (both members and interested locals) and despite the fact that the deluge curtailed one of the tours, the day resulted in 2 more trials being signed up for!



*Rebeca and her Spanish cousins find out where carrots are growing during their tour of the farm at the open day*

### July – annual summer party:



Our big annual knees-up took place earlier this month. Thank you to everyone who came to the Canalside Summer Party on 5<sup>th</sup> July to help us celebrate our scheme. It was the usual extravaganza of live music and dancing, delicious food cooked with our vegetables, and bar serving local ales and ciders, with chilled times round the fire and in the social area.



Highlights included the huge, community circle

dances in the social area in the beautiful light of the setting sun, fabulous musical contributions throughout the evening, both in the open mic and during the dancing. For me the the garlic, drying along the beams in the pole barn, provided the perfect backdrop to the festivities alongside the colourful bunting.

Massive thanks in particular to: Steven Hunt and Bruce Knight for the dances they led – a diverse global mix of fancy footwork; members of Canalside Ceilidh Collective for the melodic tunes they played to accompany the dancing; Caz Ingall and George Hardwick for the fantastic food



*A perfect evening for dancing outside*

they served up all evening; Paul Kennedy, supported by Dave Male, for providing tunes to dance to after the band finished; and everyone who helped with preparing the site, gave a hand on the bar or was part of the big tidy up on the Sunday.



*Canalside Ceilidh Collective in action!*

We'd welcome any feedback to help make next year's event even better. Please tell us how you felt about value, tickets, food, bar, camping, the music/entertainment, the evening in general or anything else! Email your comments to [mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk](mailto:mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk).

**Dates to come:**

**Aug: Tues 19<sup>th</sup>** – fruit picking and jam making with Team Fruit, in partnership with Action 21's 'Skillshare' project – join in with fruit picking from



3.30pm and jam making from 5.30pm. Limited places available for the jam making – book yours through the link in the weekly email update (where fuller details are also available).

**Sept: Sat 6<sup>th</sup> / Sun 7<sup>th</sup>** – Leamington Food & Drink Festival publicity stall – look out for details of how to help

**Fri 12<sup>th</sup> – Sun 14<sup>th</sup> – big autumn social** – potato harvest, activities, harvest feast, camping – fuller details to follow in mid-late August.

**Oct: Sat 11<sup>th</sup>** – apple pressing, bring a picnic

**Nov: Sat 9<sup>th</sup> – big winter social** – beetroot harvest, shared meal

**Dec: date TBC** – final social of the year

**Jan: date TBC** - AGM

**Want to be more involved?** If you'd like to help out with anything specific, please let Ali know. Look out for details of how you can help in emails about each event. Also, if you have an idea for an activity that you can offer to other members (either at the camping weekend or at another time), please get in touch with Ali to discuss ([mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk](mailto:mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk)).

## **WORK MORNINGS**

There are a few extra work sessions running during the summer to support work in the fruit

orchard as well as the veg fields. Please come along to any work sessions, for as much or as little time as you can spare – any help is always appreciated as your input helps to keep our seasonal labour costs low and in turn keeps the cost of the shares down. At this time of year, help is especially valued as there's lots to do! Now it's the holidays, why not bring the kids down to muck in for a little while?

Veg work mornings: Wednesday and Saturday every week, 10am-1pm

Fruit work mornings: Tuesday and Friday during the summer, 10am-1pm

To join in with these, please come to the pole barn for veg work mornings to find out where the task is (it's always written up on a board with the contact phone number of the grower who is on duty), or for fruit sessions, head to the orchard to find the workers – look at the map inside the door of the collection space if you're not sure how to get there and look along the rows of fruit trees and bushes until you find where they are working.

At this time of year, it's advisable to bring a hat, sunscreen and water bottle, although it can also be quite blowy on exposed parts of the site if there's any wind, so an extra layer is a good idea too, even if the weather is fine in town!

## **CANALSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD - PARTNER PROJECTS' UPDATE**

### *Canalside Community Bees, by Dinah Peacock*

It's been a busy and productive summer for Canalside Community Bees. After collecting several swarms we now have 13 hives! We recently filled 70 jars of honey with more honey to be collected towards the end of August. The honey will be distributed between members of Canalside Community Bees.

We had two visits from the Bee Inspectors this season. One was as part of a county wide emergency planning exercise in detecting and notifying the relevant people if a serious outbreak of a bee disease is detected. For the second visit we hosted the Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers Association Bee Safari. The inspectors were impressed with our top bar hives and the beauty of the honey combs that the bees had produced in them.

Canalside Community Bees meet on the first Saturday or Sunday of the month. There are always plenty of jobs to do including cleaning and making up equipment, planting and weeding our nectar garden, keeping the apiary tidy and of course the best part - looking after and learning about the bees.

If you are interested in joining us or for more information please contact Dinah or Kath at [canalsidecommunitybees@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:canalsidecommunitybees@yahoo.co.uk).

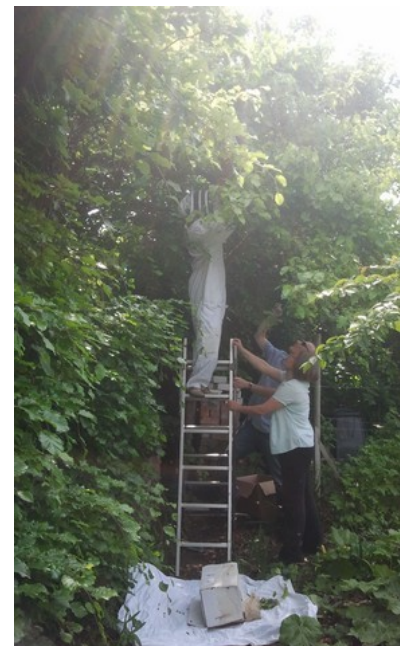
The next few bee club meets will focus on harvesting and processing the honey and wax:

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug** – honey harvest and extraction

**Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Sept** – honey and wax processing; autumn feeding

### *The Willows Care Farm, by Ellie Brown*

We continue to run a small group on Wednesdays for adults with special educational needs, where participants work in The Willows' garden and also join into Canalside work mornings.



*Bringing in a swarm*



Amy and Sybil have been working in partnership with Round Oak School running enterprise activity days making natural and recycled products and Ellie has just completed a successful pilot scheme running in partnership with Sync-Education, working with young people combining music, community building and farm work. July has also seen volunteer afternoons on Thursdays where anyone has been welcome to come and pitch in to get jobs done around the site.



*Sharing food at a Synch-Education session*

The flower beds are blooming so do pick up a bunch when you collect your veg; all donations go towards the project. We also held our first AGM in May. Thanks to everyone that came and supported it.

**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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**Sunday 24th Aug:** Foundry Wood will be hosting a performance by the fabulous Mikron Theatre! They will be performing one of their new shows – Till the Cows Come Home. A family friendly farm-fresh, full-fat, fair-trade fable about the nation's favourite food! **1pm at the OUTDOOR CLASSROOM, Foundry Wood.** Bring your own picnic, chairs and blankets. There will be a collection taken after the show.

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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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Next newsletter due out end of October 2014.

Deadline for ads with payment, and notices – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October.

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