



The first crop of Canalside sweet potatoes!

THE END OF THE GROWING SEASON

*always brings a chance for review and reflection on the growing side of the project, and this year, with the challenges that the summer brought, that is particularly true. We've had some new crops on-site, with melons for the fruit share and sweet potatoes for the veg share growing in the polytunnels through the summer. Although some crops really suffered with the endless wet, cold weather of this summer, the growers are optimistic about what the share will look like over the months to come. Read on for more about all this in **News from the Veg and Fruit Fields** from*

***Will and Gareth.** With the end of the season comes reflection on how to structure the **social side of the project next year** and an invitation to shape how this will look too. There's also news of recent socials from **Caz.** The shift in gear, as the days grow shorter and colder and the focus switches from growing and harvesting to maintenance and repair, gives the chance to finish off all the various **infrastructure projects** around the site – more about this from **Tom.** And turn to the back for the usual ads and notices from members. I hope you're keeping warm as the winter approaches and the days grow shorter. And I look forward to seeing you at the Winter social or the AGM – a reminder of dates on page 7.*

Ali, October 2012

NEWS FROM THE VEG FIELD – by Will Johnson

A lot of our time recently has been split between establishing crops for the winter in the tunnels (marking the tail end of summer crops like aubergines and cucumbers) and sorting out a place to store our harvested maincrops like potatoes and onions. It's been a funny season (aren't they all...), full of surprises, but it definitely feels like things are slowing down, which is most welcome.



This summer's success story!



Late summer fruiting veg abundance

If someone had said to me two months ago that we would have several beds of tall (some getting on for 6 foot), healthy sweetcorn plants down by the canal, I would have laughed at them (*at not with*) but as we were weeding some newly drilled rocket this week, there they were next to us. Hundreds of them. On the other side of us were two beds of all but dead courgettes. To be fair, the courgette yield could have been worse, and we certainly haven't had to make people deal with masses of them like in previous

years (though I know a few people enjoy that particular glut!); as great as the sweetcorn plants look now though, the twist in this tale is that it looks like they will run out of time and we won't get any sweetcorn anyway, sadly.

The beds of rocket we were weeding are where some of the earlier sweetcorn failed and now there is quite a lot of grass growing into the rocket; removing the green grass from the green rocket all afternoon was a bit like staring at one of those magic eye posters.

The squash harvest earlier in the day had been more like 'Where's Wally?' Last October we brought in 1250 kilograms of squash, this week we harvested 30 (thirty) kilograms. That's 2.4% of last year's harvest. It will mean no pumpkins to carve at the autumn social (they're mostly green anyway...) but more importantly, nothing for the winter shares.

Thanks to the masses who came to help with the potato harvest. Although the total harvest for the season is only just over half as much as we got last year the quality is slightly



The pole barn extension



Sorting potatoes inside the pole barn

better, and we did have too many last year really. We should be able to give them every week at the current

weight until the middle of April. The potatoes, along with the onions and garlic, are now tucked away in the pole barn, which now has walls and a door. It looks great so please do take a look next time you are picking up your veg.

It is a time of the year that we can look around the fields and tunnels and get a feel for how the shares will look right up until next May. The leeks, on their ridges, are looking better than last year, though still not as big as we'd like. I don't think the CSA has ever had a good crop of leeks so we'll have to do something differently again next year. Still, better than last year. The parsnips are looking fantastic, and I'd say we should have three or four times the amount we had last year. The carrots have gone from looking 'disastrous' to 'not too bad' and our hard work in resowing batches and stealing some tunnel space looks like it will pay off; there should be carrots in the share every other week until May. The two brassica plots are looking as we'd like at this time of year. The early plot is very weedy but the cabbages, sprouts and PSB are looking strong and healthy. The later plot (caulis, swede, kale) has been doing really well; although it all went in a bit late it has really benefited from the dry end to the summer and has seemed to have been able to use a lot of the goodness in the soil that just sat in water for most of the summer. Anyone for kale soup?

Will, 18 October 2012

...AND THE FRUIT FIELD – by Gareth Davies

We are drawing to an end of a challenging fruit year, at least as far as harvesting goes.

Although our fruit shares have been relatively good up until now and we have generally managed 4 or more items per week, we have not been able to build up any stocks of top fruit (especially apples and pears) because the crop this year has been so poor (in terms of quantity and quality). For this reason we have decided that we will be unable to sustain the fruit share beyond the end of this month as we use up the apples on the trees in the orchard. To that end we are proposing finishing shares with the pick-up on Saturday 3rd November. Those of you who have standing orders should cancel them before they go out next month. For those who paid up front (thanks!) we owe you a month's fruit and we can either reimburse this or offer you a free month next season (easier from an admin point of view).



Polytunnel melons in late summer

Although this is disappointing, on a more positive side it will enable us to concentrate on getting the orchard spruced up for the next season, which will hopefully be kinder weather-wise and therefore more productive. The good news is that we now have two regular workshares, who are learning all about the orchard and beginning to influence how it develops, as well as a regular worker, Ellie (who is also doing some WOOFING on the veg fields and the wider farm). So welcome to her! [More about Ellie on page 4.]

As a team we are looking forward together to our first good harvests of some of the top fruit like apples, plums and pears next year. We are currently putting down permeable weed control matting so look out for the workdays when we will be asking people to come down onto the farm to give a hand moving and spreading the green waste mulch and straw on top



Harvesting alpine strawberries

of this. We are also likely to have a day pruning apples and pears in the new year so look out for the announcements if you are interested in learning more about this. At the beginning of next season we will also begin sowing new ground cover plants like lemon balm, mint and sage through the mulch to complement the alpine strawberries that we have already planted. So hopefully fruit and herb shares to come! These plants will also help to attract bees and bumble bees into the orchard and should help the bee



keepers produce good tasty honey!

Some good news is that the lottery local food team who gave us a grant to establish the orchard have visited the site and seem happy with the progress made to date. They have encouraged us to apply for a capital grant to buy things that will ensure the sustainability of the project and we are currently looking at some

solar fridges and freezers for soft fruit storage as well as shelving for fruit storage. We will also ask for labels for the trees so visitors to the orchard can tell what the various trees and shrubs are without carrying a map around. If anyone has any other ideas for what they would like to see on the fruit side of things please let me know and we will try and take your wishes into consideration! Also look out for announcements about the start of fruit shares next year which we are aiming to sustain for the whole year for the first time!

Gareth, 22 October 2012

NEW ARRIVALS...

A big change on the wider farm is the arrival of volunteers through the international organisation, WWOOF (standing for Working Worldwide On Organic Farms). Volunteers contact host farms to arrange volunteering placements, that vary in length from a few days to several months; the host farm provides board and lodging in exchange for an agreed number of hours work per week. Volunteers who come to Leasowe Farm do a range of tasks on different parts of the farm and also help out at Canalside. One such volunteer is **Ellie Brown**.

Ellie has been volunteering across the farm, as well as in Canalside's fruit and veg fields for the past couple of months. She told me that she found out about WWOOFing whilst she was travelling in the U.S. and now that she's back in the U.K. she's keen to work in the same way locally. She said she's here to learn and experience life on the land, and also wants to be involved in the community. This is very apparent in the way that she's already playing a part in diverse things on the farm – volunteering as a WWOOFer, working in the fruit field, getting involved in the nascent Care Farm project which is developing on the farm. Aside from her work on the farm, she is a singer-songwriter who is playing in small venues locally. If you're interested in hearing her music, you can find some online, at eleanorbrownmusic.com – I can highly recommend it!



SITE DEVELOPMENTS – by Tom Ingall

Well, after a busy time over the summer concentrating on growing and harvesting vegetables, we've been able to turn our attention again to our on-going building projects. The focus has remained on the newly extended pole barn that has now begun to have walls built around it and clad with larch boards. So far we've been concentrating on the extended part of the barn that has now got most of our stored crops safely nestled within it. Over the coming weeks however, we'll be working on building more walls around the barn so as to create a more protected and therefore useful space out of the rest of the barn. This will come in particularly useful in the future when we have school groups visiting through the education project.

So with the slower winter season on its way, we're looking at getting all the building projects that have been started tied up along with looking at how to collect the rain water from the poly tunnels and other structures around the site. If you're feeling like you'd be up for lending a hand and getting involved with any of this building related work then please drop us a line!

EDUCATION PROJECT – *by Ali Jeffery*

We had two visits from schools booked for this autumn. One was a return visit from Our Lady and St Teresa's Catholic School – the Reception teacher liked the links to harvest and the opportunity for talking about the trip during the harvest assembly so much last year that she wanted to give this year's class the same experience. This group of children especially enjoyed hunting out a range of vegetables in the fields and polytunnels and helping to harvest a sample to take back to school. Romanesco caused the usual challenges for the children, both in remembering the name and then managing to get their tongues round the word! And of course the highlight of the morning for many of the children will be the unusual toilets – as always the 'toilet talk', which starts the visit, provoked a stream of curious children needing to try out the facilities!

This format for younger classes is now becoming familiar, and I'm extremely appreciative of the support from Lucy Bishop, who co-facilitates the visits with me, and all the members who volunteer to help the visits run smoothly. These visits could not take place without their support, and I look forward to similar support and a chance to meet with more members on future visits – if you'd like to help out, keep an eye out for emails giving details of dates.

Sadly the second visit, from Clapham Terrace Primary, fixed up by Canalside member Bruce Knight for his son Jamie's Year 1 class, had to be cancelled by the school at the last moment due to factors outside of anyone's control. Mrs. Beale, the class teacher, told me of the disappointment and the tears that were shed when the children were told of the cancellation. She hopes to visit with them in the spring once the weather warms up.

The Education Project ran another session for younger home educated children at their monthly Farm Day last week. The children and their parents looked at the structure of flowering plants, and found out what bees do to help fruiting vegetables form, through a role-play in which they pretended to be parts of a flower or the helpful pollinator. They then worked out which vegetables needed a pollinator to help them grow and we went on a hunt to find where those fruiting vegetables would grow.

SOCIALS – *by Caz Ingall*

Recent socials Hi everyone! Well, the warmth of the camping weekend seems like a long time ago now, although it was only a few weeks back. The autumn winds are here and the cold northerlies are blowing strong. I hope you're all keeping warm and healthy.

The camping weekend in September went really well - numbers were so good for the potato harvest on Saturday morning that it was all done with time to spare!



A bumper work party

It's always great to see so many people enjoying the space at Canalside in their different



ways; kids pushing each other around in wheelbarrows, playing on the climbing frame, folk sitting round the fire chatting, singing, playing music, hard working chefs cooking up fine meal after fine meal in the 'kitchen'. Huge hoorays to everyone who helped out with getting everything ready, cooking meals for many hungry bodies, washing up and generally holding it all together.

We had several different folk offering a variety of crafts for people to get stuck into - woodland hide-and-seek, wildwood animal sculptures, pebble painting, cord making, wild food foraging, and willow lantern making. The lantern parade through the woodland felt very magical this year - everyone's creations were truly beautiful and imaginative, nice work! First prize (if we had a first prize) has to go to George for his very awesome floating woodlouse (the skeleton of which can still be seen hanging from one of the totem poles in the social area)! Saturday night ended with an amazing game of (almost) midnight battle frisbee - not sure about anyone else, but I was definitely pretty bruised for days afterwards. Bruised but happy.



Foraging with Neal Hone

All in all, I think the weekend was a great success. Thank you again to everyone that helped out in whatever way, small or big. These events are truly communal affairs - they just go to show that when we come together to share space, food and fun times, anything is possible.

Our last main social of the year is our winter gathering on **Saturday 17th November**. More details on that nearer the time...

Looking forward This Winter's social will actually be the the last one that I take a lead in organising. The time has come for me to step back and allow someone else, or ideally, a group of new folk to take the socials on and move them in a new direction. It's been a great couple of years, and I've enjoyed seeing the numbers of folk turning up for socials increasing, and also seeing more and more new members coming along. I believe the socials are *such* an important part of what it is we're trying to achieve at Canalside - for me, the coming together of members to cook and eat with each other, share our talents, and generally celebrate everything we're doing is crucial to the deepening connection we all have to each other, the project, and, ultimately, the land. Long may they continue!! And I very much look forward to continue seeing you all round the fire in the future...

I know the steering group have been chatting about how the socials can move forward, so here's some more info from Ali on how you can be part of where it goes from here... Caz x

What do you want socials to look like? Following the success of Abbie's Social Sundays and in the light of Caz stepping back from her leading role in project socials, we would like to form a **socials working group** to think about what format the social side of the project will take in the future. Two members of the steering group for Canalside, Cathy Bell (veg member) and

Amy Willoughby (workshare) will be coordinating the set-up of this working group. If you'd like to help evolve how the social aspects of Canalside will work next year, please get in touch with Amy on 07817 608283 or willoughbee@hotmail.com.

And to continue some of the momentum of Social Sundays as the year draws to a close, Cathy and Amy will be facilitating two more social sessions at the project site before the end of the year. One will be a Social Sunday, like the sessions Abbie facilitated; the other will try out a Social Saturday Afternoon to follow on from the veg field work morning. Any Canalside members are welcome to come along to these (and on the Saturday, whether you've been at the work morning or not) for relaxing round the fire with a cuppa, working with others on something in the social area or sharing your ideas. The dates and times for your diary are:

Social Sunday – Sunday 11th November, 11am-3pm

Social Saturday Afternoon – Saturday 8th December, 1-4pm'ish

Look out for more details in the weekly email bulletin.

AGM reminder

Our Annual General Meeting will be on Tuesday 4th December, 7.30pm for an 8pm start. We hope to see you there to share some mulled wine and bring and share goodies, and the successes and challenges of the past year.

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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5 Acre Community Farm presents

The Real Dirt on Farmer John – a film by Taggart Siegel

Imagine your best friend is making a film about your life. He's been filming you for 25 years and is finally telling your story just as it comes to fruition. Imagine he is an extremely talented film maker who has produced and directed ground breaking films and award winning documentaries for 20 years. Imagine you lived through the 60s together and greedily swallowed all the creative freedom those years offered you then tumbled to the lowest ebb you could have imagined only to rise again to tell your tale to ardent audiences all over the world. What extraordinary luck you would have. This is the luck of a marvellous man called Farmer John.

Thursday 15th November, Coventry Quaker Meeting House Hill Street, CV1
7.30pm and afterwards in the Town Wall Tavern

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Songlines 6th Annual Winter Concert proceeds to WaterAid

8pm Saturday 1 Dec, St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Rd, Leamington Spa

This is a rare opportunity to catch Leamington and Warwick's finest 100-strong open-access community choir in full acappella action! Their annual concert is always a sell-out warm fuzzy evening of community singing and extra-ordinary acappella, and this year will be no exception. Expect soulful Maori songs, South African and American spirituals, 60s doo-wop, and great arrangements of songs by Crowded House, The Judds, and Jessie J!!

Songlines
Community Choir



WaterAid

Tickets (£5 / £3 children) will be on sale in advance at Gaia, Regent Place, L'Spa, and more info is available from Bruce: bruceknight.voice@virgin.net, 01926 778454

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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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

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kd carpentry & maintenance

Call **Kev Northey** to discuss any small scale carpentry or maintenance jobs you have in mind. Any service available from hanging doors, to fitting flooring or tiling Kev can give you a free quotation.

For a locally (Radford Semele) based experienced tradesman who provides a professional service: Call: **07894 345843** or e-mail: kd.carpentry@yahoo.com

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ELECTRICAL SERVICES

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ELEC SA

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Graham Williams 01926 431129 email: grahamwilliams3@btinternet.com

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Iyengar Yoga Workshop for those with at least 6 months experience.

When: - Saturday 17th November Time:- 10.00a.m -12.00noon

Cost: - £12.00 if booked by November 4th. £15.00 after 4th November

Where: - North Leamington School, Sandy Lane, Blackdown, Leamington Spa
CV32 6RD

Cheques payable to Paula Savery, 69 Leicester Street, Leamington Spa CV32 4TD

Email: iyengar.yoga@yahoo.co.uk for further information

Space is limited so book early to avoid disappointment!

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Next newsletter due out end of January 2013.

Deadline for ads and notices – Sunday 20th January.

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