



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

Autumn 2009

newsletter no.14

HELLO! And just where did the summer go exactly...? I for one hardly saw it flash before my eyes, and as such the amazingly warm last few weeks of September and early October were a very welcome add on to a not so dazzling July and August. The kids and I have been enjoying some beautiful long walks on the farm, starting to watch the trees turn and the countryside around us generally putting itself to bed for the approaching autumn. Ahhh, tis one of my most favourite times of year – not least because life around here starts to become not quite so manic!

As per usual, there is LOTS to report on these last few months on the project. We've seen Danny leave, and **Stew** also soon to be moving on. We have employed a new grower, **Pete**, who is to be formally starting with us at the end of the month. The veg has been just pouring off the fields and into our kitchens – I for one have felt quite overwhelmed with the amount of produce I've had to find inspiration to do something with! **Tom's News From the Field** brings us all the stories from what's really going on out there, while **Bruce** fills us in on the Canalside **social** scene. The fundraising **cauldron** in September was certainly the

event of the year, with a fantastic turnout and impressive amount of money raised for the **fruit project**. Of which we have more information here, alongside what are our thoughts on **building projects** this year and another chance for you to place your order for olive oil, citrus fruits and other delights from **La Jimena**. We've also got a whole load of delicious, wholesome **recipes** collated by Sarah to see us through the cold winter months, so there's no excuse for lack of inspiration now! So... you can see that Canalside continues to grow and develop, all in very good and positive directions.

While the days begin to get shorter, and the nights colder, I wish you all many warm autumn blessings and inspiration for all those amazing vegetables that we'll be eating in the months to come. As always, very Happy Feasting and love, Caz x



Tom's News from the field

Wow, well it's been an extremely busy summer with some major changes in the work force, but on reflection looking out in the fields it's all been coming together like never before! It was Danny's last six weeks with Canalside up to the middle of August and he was determined to leave the fields in as good a shape as possible. Mainly the aim was to get through the weeds (!) and we pretty much managed to get there, so many thanks for all your hard work Danny!

So, what has the summer been like!? Not too bad really. We could grumble about July being too wet and August never really getting going, but all in it's been much better than the previous two seasons. June ended with some of the hottest weather of the year and we thought that, at last, the time had come for us to finally put all the irrigation kit through its paces. However, it's not

really been necessary to water at all this summer until this very dry September we're experiencing at the moment. July brought with it the tidal wave of summer veg that always seems to catch us by surprise. This years' 'glut' winner was definitely the courgettes; I've not totted up the total but we may well have harvested nearly a tonne altogether! Pretty impressive plants, they are relentless in the summer, needing picking every other day to avoid marrows developing. It's because of this that we are forced to put them in the share every week. However, if we can find a way of alternating them in the future we will - we'd be interested in any thoughts on crops like courgettes, cucumbers and beans being given every other week instead of every week.

Early July is the peak of the weeding calendar and although we had a real struggle using mechanical equipment to help with these jobs, the volunteer mornings came to the rescue once again. An impressive team of volunteers has built up that come regularly on Wednesday mornings, some are 'workshare' folk who contribute each week in return for their veg and others are regulars who are either veg members or simply supporting members. It's meant that big jobs like planting, weeding and harvesting have been knocked off with ease when they could have put us off schedule and affected the success of all the crops being nurtured at this critical time of year.



It was near the end of July that we had one of biggest ever volunteer turnouts to help harvest the onions and garlic. This was combined with an open day for prospective employees applying to join the team once Danny moved on to pastures new. As such it was a tremendous taster of the project for everyone applying and was Pete's first experience of the value and spirit of the Canalside community. Pete, who is introduced in this newsletter, is the new member of the growing team. Some of you will already have met him as he has been joining us on Saturdays for a while before moving up here to start properly at the end of October.



Between Danny leaving and Pete starting we have had to rely on Charlie Swallow (one of the workshare team) and Neal Hone (our star seasonal worker!) to fill a lot of the gaps, and this has led to four or five of us all working together over September which has been a new and exciting dynamic. My personal thanks goes to these guys for their hard work during this period which has helped Stew and I to keep the momentum of the season going.

By the end of August we were really chomping at the bit to get the potatoes harvested, it looked like we had a substantial crop and we were keen to see them out of the ground and in the barn. With a slow start to the lifting parties the message soon seemed to get out and we were overwhelmed with help on the final two work mornings. When that many folk gather to help for a job the work really does seem to happen so easily - many thanks to all those who were able to come down. We ended up with over eight tonnes of spuds in the store, giving plenty to see us right through the winter. The same is true of the Onions which are now stored in the barn having been dried in the tunnels through August.



However, the most exciting harvest is only just being completed and that's the Squash and Pumpkins. It was at the end of my last news from the field that I highlighted our determination to get it right

this year and it appears to have been a real case of third time lucky! The summer was much better and this combined with our timing being spot on has resulted in some beautiful Squash. With eight different varieties ranging from bright red through black to pale blue we are very excited about being able to spice up the share through the winter months with regular Squash and Pumpkins. We're presently working on how best to store them so as we get to enjoy as many of them as possible.

So, the focus is now towards the colder months of the year. The tunnels have provided us with stacks of lush summer veg and we're now at that critical phase of turning them around for the winter and spring crops. Particularly interesting are all the winter salad leaves that come throughout this season, although this year we've managed to start the flow of salad bags a lot earlier than previously due to some late outdoor sowings that have come on in abundance under these warm September days.

New arrivals...

The main new arrival on the Canalside growing team is Pete Corbett, who will officially start with us as our new 'main' grower at the end of October. I know that all of us at Canalside are really looking forward to getting to know Pete and to welcoming him into our very lovely community. (Sorry, no photo of Pete just yet!)

Pete grew up in Godalming, Surrey and is 26 years old. In his own words, he has 'an interest in agrarianism, Buddhism, and the conjoining of the two!' Pete also enjoys hiking, reading poetry and playing the piano. While Pete will be initially moving in with friends and Canalside members Kath and Dan, he is going to be completely new to this area, so if anyone ever fancies showing him the wild sites of Leamington, I'm sure he'd be really appreciative!

We also have a new addition to our administration team, and that is Fiona Cottrell in the form of Finance Administrator. Fiona has helped me with the Canalside accounts on a voluntary basis for the last few months, and from the beginning of October has taken over this area of the work in a paid capacity. She recently qualified as a Management Accountant after many years of studying, and works as a Finance Officer for an international human rights charity based in Moreton-in-Marsh. She has been part of Canalside since the first pig club, and lives in Cubbington with Gareth Davies (one of Canalside's founding members), and their three children Joe, Chrissie and Eliza.



If anyone has any finance queries or issues from now on, please contact Fiona directly on fiona@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk.

We have had one new arrival to our workshare team in recent times, and that is Dasi Dwek. In her own words, Dasi is 'arty and does community art work with young people in Coventry.' She is part of a choir, cycles lots, enjoys 'getting her fingers in the mud and learning about growing'. In addition, Dasi is also studying for an MA in Conflict Transformation at Coventry University. So... a pretty busy person is she, and another very welcome addition to the growing team! (No picture of Dasi either, sorry!)



And then there's Neal Hone, who, as Tom says, has been our 'star seasonal worker' this year. Neal lives on a canal boat, does a lot of wild food foraging and also cultivates his own mushrooms in various sheds around Leamington. He also cultivated all our shiitake spawn this year, so we can thank him for all the amazing mushrooms we'll be starting to harvest next year! Neal has been helping us out with some well needed work over the summer months and in the time between Danny leaving and Pete starting. While the intense seasonal work is

slowly waning off now, hopefully Neal hasn't been too put off and will be able to continue to help us out in times of need in the future!

...and departures

We will be saying goodbye to Stew at the beginning of this Winter, as he has decided to move onto pastures new. Stew has been a grower with Canalside since the very beginning, and has been an involved member of the Steering Group in that time as well. Stew's input into the project has been invaluable and he, Tom and Danny made a brilliant growing team, having gone through 3 increasingly successful growing seasons together. Between the three of them, they worked wonders out in the fields and in the polytunnels, bringing to all our plates bounteous harvests and truly delicious vegetables.



Stew and his partner, Hannah, have decided to leave the Leamington area to find their home someplace else. Although they are still not clear on the details, the overall idea seems to be to head to New Zealand with a view to getting involved in some interesting projects and/or communities over there. Their immediate plans, however, are to spend the winter months somewhere warm, taking some time out for themselves.

On behalf of everyone at Canalside, we wish both Stew and Hannah lots of love and luck for all their future plans and hope that they will come back and visit us.

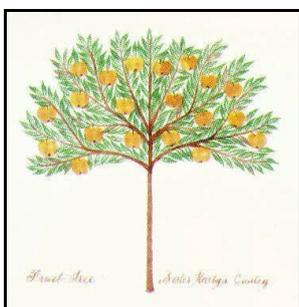
building project

With the madness of summer behind us, when there is just so much going on with the growing at Canalside and many folk are here there and everywhere enjoying all the summer activities on offer around the country we've been able to focus on the Canalside site once again.

A small group of members has been meeting for several months now to discuss all of the different options for buildings on the Canalside site and over that time we have looked at a lot of options, including quite large and ambitious projects. The conclusions that we've come to though are that it's best to start with the smaller more manageable projects to begin with and allow the development of the site to be more 'organic'!

We'd also really welcome the involvement of other Canalside members who would like to contribute to this side of the project. So, we're aiming to develop things with a working group over the autumn, winter and early spring, whilst the veg fields are vaguely sleepy. The geodome had a great initial makeover for the ceiling and we'd love to continue to embellish it and make it more and more useable for all Canalside members. Toilet facilities are also a main area of focus with a design having been developed earlier in the year for a substantial block. Whether this is further developed and made a reality is still a possibility for the future. In the mean time we're proposing a work party over the coming months to put a second shed together that can become a designated compost loo, rather than us having to share the loo with our tool store!

It's all to be done and it's your site to develop in ways that'll make it accessible and user friendly for all the members. So please get in touch if you'd like to be more involved in organising these work events, and keep an eye out for emails letting you know when we'll be working on these projects.



Fruit Field - by Tom

As the autumn really gets going, we're starting to focus more and more on the details of the design and planting of the fruit field at Canalside. The plan has always been to get as much of the field planted up with trees, bushes and canes as possible this coming

autumn and winter; as they say ' the best time to plant a tree is ten years ago!'. Members of the fruit group have been regularly meeting to discuss the different options for the field, of which there are many! Dick Ashworth has been doing absolutely sterling work wading through the books and catalogues to come up with some short lists of the hundreds and hundreds of varieties out there that we could choose from.

The varieties we are drawn to have to be robust in terms of pest and disease and offer a good range of options for harvesting and storing so as to stretch the crops out as much as possible. But of course the taste of the fruit is of utmost importance as well, with many of these varieties offering a range of tastes that are simply not available in the shops.

With the winter approaching fast and the Local Food Lottery Fund application that we have made taking up to six months to let us know if we have been successful or not, we have decided to take matters into our own hands! Canalside is currently looking at its last accounting year which happens to have just come to a close to see whether we as an organisation can afford to invest in the fruit project. It's certainly been a good year and there should be the possibility of some surplus that could be re-invested. We also held our first fundraising event in the form of the Ceilidh back in September which raised over £700 and it was at the Ceilidh that we launched the idea of members being able to 'sponsor a tree'! To which we've already had a great response.

As the details of the design are ironed out, those folk who do decide to contribute to the fruit field will be able to choose the type and variety of tree that they would like to sponsor (of which there is likely to be a large list to choose from). Then, of course, as with all things Canalside we will be running volunteer preparation and planting days. The timing of these days is yet to be decided but we will definitely be holding a number of fruit project open days or weekends over the autumn and winter.

Then there is the real nuts and bolts of the scheme, which will be similar in many ways to the existing veg project in that folk will be able to sign up to a share in the harvest. What will be quite different though is the extreme seasonality of fruit compared to veg. As such, most of the produce will be ripe and ready for distribution during the summer and autumn months, with gluts needing processing and storing as it is harvested. We will hope to develop advice on this and even days when members can get together to do co-ordinated processing, be it jam making, freezing, bottling or juicing. Then there are the fruits that can be stored through the winter, these are mainly apples with some other top fruits offering possibilities for limited storage.

The cost of a fruit share will start fairly low and increase as the fruit bushes and then trees grow and come into fruit. We are aiming, however, at having some soft fruit available from the summer of 2011. Please see the details below for sponsoring a fruit tree or get in touch if you would like to make a contribution to setting this exciting project in motion.

Sponsor a tree!

If you would like to contribute to the new Canalside fruit field/forest garden project, then why not sponsor a tree?! It really couldn't be easier... The cost of one tree is **£15** and you can sponsor as many as you like! Just send your money and request to Caz and she will send you a **Tree Gift Certificate** in return. Just as soon as we have more information, you will even be able to choose which type of fruit tree (and even which variety!) you would like to sponsor.

*Can't think of that perfect birthday or Christmas gift..? Want to make a more positive and sustainable impact with your present giving? Then why not make a gift to Canalside in the form of a fruit tree (or two!) and we will send you a lovely **Tree Gift Certificate** with the recipient's name and gift details on for you to give to the person in question as proof of sponsorship. And they can even come and help plant the tree(s) too!*

Contact Caz for more details...

general information

What's to come in your veg share...

Here is a list of veg you can expect to see in your veg shares over the coming months. And alongside this newsletter is a collection of recipes that our good friend and member Sarah has put together to help us out in those lack of inspiration moments. Mmmmm... enjoy!

Potatoes	Carrots	Onions (White/Red)	Garlic	Spinach
	Chard	Beetroot	Tomatoes	Peppers
		Fennel		Celeriac
Parsnips	Cabbage (White/Savoy/Red/January King)	Kohlrabi	Calabrese	
Romanesco	Swede	Brussels Sprouts	Leeks	Squash/Pumpkins
	Kale (Red/Curly/Cavalo Nero)	Chicory	Salad Packs	

Extra potatoes for sale! Due to our pretty spectacular potato harvest this year, we would like to offer Canalside members (veg and non-veg alike) the opportunity of purchasing 25kg sacks from us for £15. Please note, you will still be receiving your usual potatoes in your weekly veg share, but this is just in addition to those. We know just how much some of you like your tatties so here's your chance to have your very own sack full to delve into at your heart's desire! It is also an opportunity for non-veg members to buy some excess produce too. **Contact Caz for more info!**

Many of you will remember the mention of **La Jimena** in the last newsletter, but if not, here is the information again: La Jimena (www.lajimena.co.uk) is a CSA based just to the south of Granada in southern Spain producing olive oil, olives, citrus fruits, almonds and figs. Once a year they do a big delivery to a number of different CSA outlets in the UK, including Stroud and Earthshare and it is possible to order the following things from them:



~Olive oil is available in 3 litres (**£28**), 5 litres (**£41**) and 25 litres (**£190**)

~A standard fruitshare box contains: 5 litres of olive oil, 1.5 litres of olives in brine and 10kg of citrus, almonds and sun dried figs. The cost is **£69**.

~A small box contains 3 litres of olive oil, 1.5 litres of olives in brine and 5kg of citrus, almonds and sun dried figs. The cost is **£49**.

If you would be interested in taking up this offer, **please get in touch with Caz and place your order now!** For delivery at the end of February next year, we need to place our order by the beginning of the same month – but it makes sense to start taking orders now. I will remind everyone of it again in our next newsletter, but if you're keen to place an order, why not do it now?!

Work mornings

Please remember we hold 2 work mornings every week. These are on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**, from **10am – 1pm**. If there is a specific task to be done, I will notify you in advance, otherwise please just turn up and get stuck in to whatever there is to do on the day. No need to let us know if you are coming, just come! And don't forget to put your name in the Signing In book in the yurt when you arrive and leave, so we can keep track of our volunteer hours over the year!

Socials – by Bruce

“GOLDEN DAYS OF SUMMER SOCIALS!”



Before I write about the magnificent ceilidh, I'll try to remember the previous 2 socials. We celebrated the summer solstice a week late (27 June) with the usual fire and feast. The weather was glorious and I'm sure there was a craft activity but I can't remember what! Lammas (1 Aug) was a more subdued affair, with a smaller turnout due to the summer hols and the grey, dreck weather. Judy taught some members the lost art of making straw-dollies and those that came had a very nice day.



And then, of course, unless you've been living in a hole for the last couple of months you will already know about the splendid ceilidh we held for the Autumn harvest/equinox. Walking down the Canalside track in the dark, ceilidh-goers turned a corner and were met by an amazing ("Hardyesque" - according to Dave Steele) sight: two lit marquees, a candlelit dome serving as the bar, a roaring fire, and the excellent music of the Warwick

Uni Folk Club Band. We'll never know for sure but we reckon that over 200 people came to dance and make merry on that Indian summer's evening, which several people described as "the best party they'd ever been to!" Over £700 was raised for the new fruit field/forest garden project, which is just fantastic – and what with all the amazing help and support given by Canalside members and friends alike, it really was a truly community affair. Huge thanks again to everyone who came, helped, danced, sang, made amazing cakes or simply just partied.



Next social: Samhain (Halloween), Sat 31 Oct. We warmly invite you to Canalside to work, feast and celebrate the Celtic festival of Samhain. Usual programme: optional work party from 10-1, lunch from 1pm, and a walk around the farm at 2:30 ish. Craft event to be confirmed, but you've guessed it, it will almost definitely involve PUMPKINS. See you there - don't forget your broomstick! Love, Bruce

If you are interested in offering your time and skills to set up or help out on the night please get in touch with Bruce (bruceknight.voice@virgin.net or 01926 778454) We'll be needing creative solutions for a variety of tasks: lighting the marquee, supplying power to the band, staffing the ceilidh bar, sorting out car parking to name a few.

FYI, social dates for your calendar for 2009 are:

Saturday 31 October

Samhain/Halloween

Saturday 19 December

Winter Solstice



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