



## Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

WINTER/SPRING 2010

Newsletter no. 16

HELLO! And welcome to my first edition of the newsletter since taking on the role of General Administrator. The last few months have been a bit of a crazy whirl – it's not until you start to do a job that you realise how many elements there are to it! That said, I am beginning to feel more at home in the role now, and don't have to constantly consult other more knowledgeable people to get the job done. And I'm really enjoying meeting and being in touch with so many more members than before. Included in this issue you will find: **NEWS FROM THE FIELD** from all the growers, including a new arrival in the field and up-and-coming developments; an update on the **FRUIT PROJECT** from Dick Ashworth; news about **SITE CHANGES** from Tom and the new **SCHOOLS' PROJECT** from me, and some more information about the **NEXT SOCIAL IN JUNE** from Caz. As always, we have **MEMBERS' CORNER**, a space where you can promote your exciting ideas to your fellow members, and new to this edition is a **SMALL ADS** section for members to promote their business ventures. In addition to the newsletter itself, there is a tantalising range of **SEASONAL RECIPES** from Caz to give you a taste of what's to come in the share over the next few months, and ideas of what to do with the different veg when it makes its appearance!

Happy cooking and enjoy the summer! Ali



Mulch spreading by the poly-tunnels

### We need new veg members!!

Canalside is really on the publicity trail this year as we really need to get our membership numbers up. So... please keep spreading the word to friends, family and colleagues and get them to sign up!

We're still on 105 members, as new members have simply replaced people who have had to leave. Our ideal number is 115, so PLEASE help us get those last 10 members we need and help make this year a really successful one. Thank you!

## News from the Field – by Charlie, Pete and Tom

As we're sure you're all well aware this has been one of the coldest, hardest winters since the CSA (and our lives) began! This was a challenge for us with an unprecedented amount of snow which we were glad to see the back of. One of the main losses caused by the flurry was the kale, which got massacred by hungry pigeons looking for food sticking out of the snow! Since the drama of January the weather's been here, there and everywhere: lovely and dry for the end of February/beginning of March, then two very wet weeks at the end of March, followed by the driest April on record. The sunny days have been a joy to work in but have meant we've struggled to get some of the little plants going on the field. The spring equinox social was a seriously wet and muddy affair but lots of people came to help us plant half the onions which was great, and the rain did stop long enough for us to sit and enjoy some food together. Thank you to everyone, as ever, for helping.



Onion planting workers

We have been busy seed sowing since way back in January, when the first salad leaves were sown over at Ryton, where we make use of their heated greenhouses. This year we bought a

heater and other equipment so that we can start to develop our own propagation space at the farm and be able to start more plants off on site increasing our self sufficiency and reducing our carbon footprint further.

A big and exciting event for the growers (we don't get out much) came with the arrival of a new tractor! This machine is smaller and much more suited to our needs and has its own special sort of air conditioning, being a cableless tractor...



The share in April

Vegetable highlights include the salad from the tunnels which has been plentiful and varied, and a real pleasure to pick and mix. The true spinach, a new addition to Canalside's vegetable menu, has done really well and been so tasty. The leeks have done us proud and there are still more to come; PSB has just finished but there were some weeks of great harvest; the caulis have been super too, not to

mention the bumper harvest of carrots! When will we ever get enough of them?... We're sure you've asked yourselves that over the last few months too! Thanks to all those who attended the Beltane social to help us lift a full bed of our lovely orange friends. The potatoes have gone on later than ever before as we had a bumper harvest last year so we are now seeing how far they will stretch. And the truly ornate squashes lasted us till the middle of February in the squash store and with any luck (and a bit of tinkering with the design of the store) next year they could last even longer!

You will have noticed the yurt has recently had a make-over with a lick of paint, lots of new posters and information and sunflowers on their way for the outside. We hope this will give you more space to get your veg sorted and just generally gives the place an airy feel. We are building on this theme with the purchase of a couple of sheds, one for the growers and our mud and one to allow us to set up a proper tool shed and move the toilet to a shed all of it's own.

Of course we are soon to be in the hungry gap but we have some brilliant crops to tantalise your taste buds with during this time such as sugar snap peas, baby bunched beets, leeks and caulis (which should last through most of May we hope) and of course the arrival in early June of the new spuds.

### REMINDERS TO ALL VEG SHARE MEMBERS

In the past month or so I have heard from a few veg share members that they are sadly unable to continue with their veg share. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind all veg share members that we do ask for **2 months notice** when cancelling a veg subscription, as stated in the notes you refer to when filling out your veg subscription form. This allows us to make decisions about our budget and planting plans. As such, we are unable to stop a veg share subscription with immediate effect.

Please remember the deadlines for **notifying about veg share collection changes**:

12noon Monday for collection on Tuesday or Wednesday

12noon Thursday for collection on Saturday

If you have missed the deadline, please do not send an email as I won't read it in time.

Call or text me instead – 07912 883422

To help me when **making changes to collection days** please tell me: your name, share size and collection day, the date(s) you don't want to collect and the date of any extra-ordinary days you wish to collect. This saves me a lot of time having to confirm details.

It really assists me in my work if people could ensure that **email titles** refer to the current message and not a previous message. Thank you very much!

## Fruit field – by Dick Ashworth

In the last newsletter I was looking forward to a large planting of soft fruit. After a slight hiccup - chasing a missing consignment - this was all planted by the first week in March.

It included:

400 Raspberry canes	(4 varieties)
30 Gooseberry bushes	(3 varieties)
20 Black Currants	(4 varieties)
20 Red Currants	(5 varieties)
15 White Currants	(2 varieties)
15 Blackberries	(5 varieties)
3 Loganberries & 3 Tayberries	
24 Rhubarb plants	(2 varieties)



Soft fruit planting

This is over half of our planned soft fruit. We shall be ordering another big batch of soft fruit for planting late this year, to fill up the space available in "Upper Slade" – the orchard field.

Meantime, we have also made a few more additions to fill some of the remaining gaps among the rows of top fruit trees. These include 4 more Cherries, 2 Mulberries, 2 Quinces, 2 Medlars, and a sweet Bay.

Whatever the predictions for climate, the short term weather is something else – and has been very variable as ever. The trees appear to have survived the long cold winter; then recently the newly planted soft fruit has had to contend with several weeks without rain, just as they were starting to grow. I try not to nag Tom too much, about continuing occasional maintenance - mulching, grass cutting, and watering when needed. And as I keep saying, patience is the watchword while the orchard gets its roots in and gradually grows away.



Apple blossom in the new fruit garden

If you have had time to pause and glance at the trees lately, you will notice they are mostly looking a bit scalped. All the apples and pears have had the lead pruned back to between 1/2 and 1 metre tall. After a few weeks the plums and cherries will also be cut back. This is to encourage new side shoots - just below the cut - which will form the main "laterals" which will grow out into open bush shaped trees.

One other concern is labelling: it's quite difficult and/or expensive to provide really weather proof labels for the long term. The temporary labels, from the December planting, were very soon both trashed and the lettering completely faded over the winter. For the time being, I am starting to try some slightly more robust replacement labels. So I hope that fairly soon visitors will be able to identify many, if not all the varieties in the orchard.

### FRUIT GARDEN SPONSORSHIP!

Through our sponsorship scheme we have now covered the cost of all the fruit trees which have been planted to date – 125! Fantastic – huge thanks to all our sponsors!

If you would still like to sponsor something in our fruit garden, we are now offering sponsorship for the soft fruit which has been planted. What could make a lovelier summer-time gift, for a birthday or anniversary (or just because), than knowing you've contributed to fruitful summer bounty in Canalside's fruit garden?

For **£5**, you can sponsor: 1 currant or gooseberry bush **OR** 4 raspberry canes. You can sponsor in as many multiples of £5 as you like! Just send your money and request to me. If you let me know who the sponsorship is for, I will send you a **SOFT FRUIT GIFT CERTIFICATE**.

There will also be a few trees to plant in the gaps, of more unusual varieties.

If you would particularly like to sponsor a tree, you can sponsor one of these last few, for **£15 each** as before!

## Site Developments – by Tom

Well, as everyone who comes regularly to the farm will no doubt have noticed, there has been substantial development down on the land recently. Canalside rents the land we are based on from Leasowe Farm which is jointly managed by Caz, me, and my parents, John and Jane. It's the farm that has initiated a lot of the developments with plans to erect a new crop store opposite the car park. This levelling resulted in subsoil being shifted around to create a raised area below the car park. This area was previously unsuitable to build on due to the natural flow of rain water through it but with it lifted up this is now possible. This will therefore be where we start to develop the Canalside structures; to start with that'll be the yurt and a couple of sheds.

Our long term plan for the Canalside site is to make it into a pleasant and user-friendly area for members to access and enjoy. Kate Thomas has drawn up an exciting artist's impression of what the site might look like in the future, and this has been up in the yurt recently for viewing and comments. We had a great day at the Imbolc social moving the geodome onto a fixed base with some twenty people helping to carry it across! Since then some basic improvements have been carried out, making it waterproof and installing a semi-permanent



Moving the geodome onto its new platform

kitchen which was kindly donated by Tony and Felix Mindham. This is our shared facility as a community to use when we are on site. So far it's mainly been used during the seasonal socials that are held on the farm, but the aim is to have the geodome established so it can be used after any work morning by anyone.

Now the landscaping work has been completed we're focusing on the possibility of moving the yurt and shed from their present position onto the new site. This was planned for a few weeks ago but it's a big job and we made the decision late in the week with the forecast looking fine; unfortunately this wasn't a good day for folk and no-one could come down and help. A few of us took the opportunity to re-vamp the yurt in-situ instead in preparation for moving it at a later date. Hopefully the yurt feels like a more inviting space to come into and the way everything is laid out is clearer. We've also recently purchased two second hand sheds which will act as extra veg sorting space and as a dedicated composting toilet.

So, we're at an exciting phase in the development of the Canalside site. We'll be looking to get a work party together to move these plans forward in the coming weeks and would love any members who are interested in contributing to the planning and implementation to get involved.

## Schools Project – by Ali

As a community project, the farm is keen to engage local schools and has been exploring how to do this for the past year or two. Over the past few months, the schools' project has been slowly but steadily taking shape. After the initial meetings which included a larger number of people, a small working group was formed with representatives from Canalside and Action 21 (with whom this project is being run). Having met several times since early March, we have now finalised the outline of a visit from a single class in the autumn of this year, as a pilot project. We are about to make contact with a local school to identify a suitable class to take part in a one-day workshop at Canalside project site. This first visit will be aimed a class of under 7s and will focus on sensory experience of a range of seasonal vegetables, as well as naming them and identifying them in the field.

Later in the summer we will be holding a session to make materials for the workshop, and would appreciate any volunteers to assist in this task – I'll be in touch about this. Nearer the time of the workshop we will get in touch again to seek volunteers who would be interested in helping on the day of the workshop.

## Work mornings

Please remember we hold 2 work mornings every week. These are on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**, from **10am – 1pm**. At this time of year, there is so much to do, and any voluntary work is especially appreciated, and helps get the busiest part of the season going on the right footing. In fact May and June are make-or-break for the rest of the season in terms of getting plants into the beds at the right time and keeping on top of the weeding.

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 and use them for matched funding if we need to!

## Socials

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September *\*Revised date\**

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October *\*Corrected date\**

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December

**Summer Solstice and Folk on The Water event**

**Lammas/Harvest Festival**

**Autumn Equinox (Michaelmas & CEILIDH night!)**

**Samhain/Halloween**

**Winter Solstice (Christmas)**

## Recent Socials

We were blessed with truly lovely weather for the most **recent social – our Beltane celebration**, which actually fell on Beltane itself this year, May 1<sup>st</sup> being a Saturday. We hosted Hereburgh Morris group for a fantastic display of a variety of Morris dances using sticks and handkerchiefs, and before they finished had an opportunity to have a go at a stick dance, with joyful, light-footed participation from members of all ages! It certainly filled me with the joys of the summer to come. This was followed by a shorter-than-usual work morning, in which a small but dedicated work crew harvested somewhere in the region of 500kg



Hereburgh Morris



Egg painting activity

of carrots!

In rather less lovely weather was our **Equinox social**, at which the onion field we

were planting in was liberally doused with rain – some of us timed our arrival to miss that! Good headway was made with planting onions, despite the wet, muddy conditions, while some of the children painted eggs with Jane Ingall out of the wind in the geodome. The usual delicious lunch was shared by all afterwards, with the rain mostly holding off!

## Summer Solstice social and Folk on the Water fundraiser – by Caz Monday 28th June 2010, 3.30pm onwards

Folk on the Water is a travelling canal boat of musicians who are touring the Grand Union canal for 2 weeks from the end of June, raising money and awareness for Zoe's Place Children's Hospice in Coventry, as well as linking up canal-side communities through musical events. On Monday 28th June they are passing Canalside and will be stopping by for an after-school event of African drumming, scarecrow making, farm walks and much more.

Canalside member and Radford resident, Claire Honey, will be running the drumming workshops (for ages 3 and upwards) whilst others help making scarecrows for the veg fields and another member demonstrates how to make your very own bumble bee nest. We will have at least 2 face painters on site throughout the event as well as open space for everyone to run around the fields and enjoy what we hope will be a sunny midsummer's eve. After an early evening supper picnic, we will be going on into the night with an open-mic music session around the fire.

For your information, this event is open to Canalside members but we are also inviting all Radford School families along, as well as posting flyers through all households in Radford Semele. The aim is to try and engage our direct local community, and specifically the school, more with what is happening on the farm. And you never know, we may well inspire a few more people to sign up too! The event is entirely free, but we will be selling vegetable plants for £.150 each to try to raise a little money as well.

We may well be looking for volunteers to help with the workshops nearer the time – another great opportunity for those of you who haven't been able to make it along to help with any field work yet or who feel more inspired to get involved on this kind of level. Much more detailed info about the day to follow...

*If you are interested in offering your time and skills to any of our social events, please get in touch with Bruce ([bruceknight.voice@virgin.net](mailto:bruceknight.voice@virgin.net) or 01926 778454) Don't forget, this can count towards your annual voluntary contribution to the project.*

## General information

### *Canalside blog*

<http://canalsidecommunityfood.blogspot.com/>

This has been established for quite a while now, and I would just like to remind you of its existence!! Here you can read about local events for which I have received details, Canalside events, local job opportunities and much more. The easiest way to be informed of any updates is to 'Subscribe by email' by entering your email address in the space at the right-hand side (just below the lovely drawing of the box of veg).

## 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 Canalsider's..? If so, then this is the space for you!

Please come along to



Coventry & Warwickshire Supporters Group

Fundraiser

**Saturday 22 May**

**11am-2pm**

Bath Place Community Venture at the old Library in Avenue Road

**Toys   Children's Clothes   Books**  
**Bric-a-brac   Plants   Cakes**

**Tea, Coffee and Juice**

## **Introduction to Permaculture course, Sat 22nd - Sun 23rd May 2010, 9.30am - 4.30pm**

Your last chance to book your place on this exciting course run by permaculture teacher Ruth O'Brien. There'll be outdoor and indoor sessions, including talks, discussions and group work; a nature observation walk, a practical project, games, slideshow and an opportunity to have a go at creating a simple permaculture design for the East Gate Lodge garden.

Cost is £65/£45/£25 for the weekend  
(concessionary rate at participant's own discretion).

Tea and coffee will be provided  
but participants should bring lunch to share with the group.

If you are interested in booking a place on the course, please contact Action 21 directly on [info@action21.co.uk](mailto:info@action21.co.uk) or 01926 453030.

## **Small Ads**

Do you have any business ventures you'd like to advertise to other members of Canalside? Then *this* is the space for you!

Exam nerves? A habit or phobia you want to overcome?  
Hypnotherapy can help.  
Also confidence issues, self esteem and body image.  
Cathy Bell. 07815 030673 or [cathy.bell7@ntlworld.com](mailto:cathy.bell7@ntlworld.com)

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### **Cook up a Storm!**

Home baked, cakey treats that leave your tummy feeling warm and fuzzy.

Completely vegan, often gluten-free and always made with love,  
our cakes use as many organic ingredients as we can lay our hands on.

Whole cakes are available to order

or are sold by the slice in Gaia and at the Magic Pan.

Tempting flavours include lemon explosion, sticky toffee slice,  
chocolate rum cupcakes and peanut choc chip cookie creams

or we are quite happy to bake requests!

If you fancy something tasty for the weekend, or a midweek indulgence,  
contact Laura on 07908 578604 or [cookupastorm@veganmail.com](mailto:cookupastorm@veganmail.com) to find out more.

***Please turn over for more small ads!***

Room to rent in a privately owned creative house.  
To share with female, in early 40's.  
Central but quiet location. Lovely garden and potential to share office space.  
Medium sized room.  
£300 pm including bills. Available 2nd week in June. Short lets OK.  
Please contact Louise 01926 889227 / 07733133481

## *New Evening Pancake House*

♥ **The Magic Pan** ♥

*has opened NEAR YOU!*

Wednesdays to Saturdays ♥ 5.00pm to 10.00pm  
@ Zeb's Café, 52 High Street  
Leamington Spa  
CV31 1LP

Info @

♥ **Zeb's Magic Pan@Gmail.com** ♥

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