



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme



Summer 2009

newsletter no. 13

HELLO! Well, summer here we are! And hasn't it been amazing so far? Since last writing, we've come through a pretty perfect Spring, had a good soaking of rain at the beginning of May, and again a couple of weeks ago, but overall the sun has been shining brightly down on us. I for one LOVE the summer and all the promise of long days and outdoor living, so I welcome in these months hugely.

We've were blessed with another weekend of beautiful weather for Leamington's own **Peace Festival**. How lucky we are to have such a fantastic and inspiring event on our very doorstep. Canalside had a stall, where we flew our very own community-made banner, and we had an enormous interest in the scheme. With numerous sign ups and having made over £500 on veg plant sales, all in all it was a hugely successful weekend for us. Enormous thank yous to all the amazing volunteers who helped run the stall over the weekend.

Well, we have another lengthy newsletter – they seem to get longer and more diverse with each passing season! We have the usual **Tom's News from the Field**, updates from all our working sub-committees on the **Building** and **Fruit** projects. We welcome in two more fabulous workshare volunteers, **Helen** and **Amy**, yet say bon voyage to another as **Ali** sets off on her over sea travels. Bruce has continued working tirelessly to create some great **socials** and

has written a lovely long update on all the latest and upcoming events. I've even included some classic photos from the Beltane circle dance back in May – what a day to remember!

The biggest news in the project at the moment is that of **Danny**, our main grower, leaving both Canalside and Leamington, so we say a formal goodbye to him also here, as well as advertising the job vacancy that he's leaving behind. Do you know of anyone who could possibly fill our main grower void come September? Then ask them to get in touch for more details! Just think, by the next newsletter, we should have a new main grower on the workforce!

So, the wheel of the year keeps on turning, and things at Canalside go from strength to strength. It's going to be another busy and energy-filled season this summer with lots to look forward to, not least of all our end of season **ceilidh** on the 19th September. For more details on this and all things Canalside, read on...

With love and many warm summertime blessings, Caz x



tOM's News from the field

We'll I'm writing this at 10pm on Friday the 19th of June and in a little under seven hours I'll be getting up to start my shift doing the Saturday harvest. This will be for the 104th Saturday veg collection since Canalside started providing veg shares - that's right, two whole years of continuous veg shares, it feels like a whole lot longer! I managed to stay much calmer this year as the 'hungry gap' approached; actually we're not sure we really had much of a gap this year. It was certainly lean on the staples but with a bounty of fresh veg coming out of

the tunnels we managed to keep the share pretty varied and interesting right through May and early June.

The leaner weeks do have their plus sides though as this period when there is less to harvest out in the fields coincides neatly with when there are suddenly a million jobs on the list. Which is why, when it came time to start picking, we were cursing our success at managing, for



the first time, to grow a decent crop of peas. Those first peas were so tasty that Danny had to ration us growers to just the one pod at the end of each row! That first harvest allowed folk to have just 60g each but by the next week the plants had come on and the share had increased to 250g. Having a crop like this come good at the beginning of May is hugely rewarding for us so we

hope you've enjoyed them as much as we have! The other Spring success story from the tunnels has been the early bunched Beets. This time of year is often beset with leafy greens so we thought we'd try this crop in the tunnel to add some variation. We were particularly impressed with the quality of the leaves which, of course, can be cooked up in much the same way as Chard/Spinach.

Outside the seasons were turning fast with our very last crop from last years planting being harvested at the beginning of June. These were the last, late variety of Cauliflowers that hung on in there to the bitter end, only just coming good in time for the land to be turned around so as this years crop of Sweetcorn could be planted out. We had six different varieties of Cauliflower this Spring, with some cropping extremely heavily, leading to us becoming rather blasé about all this beautiful and enormous Cauliflowers! Early outside crop successes include the Kohl Rabi that's been in the share over the last few weeks. Fast growing, we thought it could spice the share up at this time of year and these young ones are so juicy, especially when sliced up and eaten raw.



For the last eight weeks or so it's been 'mucking season'! Sadly this much anticipated period has now passed (!) during which over 60 tonnes of manure was flung around by a lot of different folk. If you missed out on the delights of forking dung, then don't worry there's always more to spread. This has all been in preparation for the new season of crops that have been gradually brought on and planted out. The last few weeks have seen several planting sessions during the volunteer work mornings, with lots of members lending a hand to get the next lot of veg in the ground. Not least were the Squash that went in the ground in the second week of June. Having not had a decent crop off the Squash since we started Canalside, we're truly determined that this will be the year of the bountiful Squash harvest, so keep your fingers crossed for lots of sunshine.

So where are we at now? Well the Summer crops are about to hit the yurt, we've just picked the first few crates of Broad Beans which are doing very well. We'll also start to harvest the French Beans from in the tunnels which will mean we'll have firmly entered bean season. After a bit of a hold up with the potato lifter, Stew and I were finally able to lift the first of the new potatoes today, and I for one have been really pining after these. Cucumbers are on their way now too, with slightly less plants than last year we'll wait and see what the glut looks like!

New arrivals...

We've had two new wonderful additions to our workshare team over the last 3 months - Helen Tudge and Amy Footer, both of whom started volunteering with us in April.



Helen lives in Leamington with her 3 children Emily 17, Maisie 13 and Michael 10. The rest of the week she works as a self employed physiotherapist but loves to get outdoors as often as possible, so her leisure time is mainly spent running, cycling, climbing and kayaking. Here's what she says about her motivations behind joining Canalside as a workshare volunteer:

"I liked the idea of having an allotment, reminiscent of helping my dad on Sundays on his allotment when I was a kid but had to admit I just don't know enough about growing stuff. Hence the work share option suits me perfectly as I get to be outdoors, spend a few hours working on the land and learn all sorts of new skills, but there are proper growers making the decisions so success is virtually guaranteed. Obviously the veg I then take home is fantastic and it has meant me and the kids have tried some things, such as kohlrabi, that we would never normally choose doing the supermarket run. I am looking forward to seeing the seasons change on the farm and hope to bring the kids along to some socials and meet a few more members."

Amy moved to Leamington at the beginning of March because she got a job with Action 21: "Canalside was one of the first things I heard about and having really enjoyed woofing in South America I thought I'd go along and see what it was like. Everyone's been really welcoming and friendly and I've really enjoyed learning more about growing organically. Luckily my boss at Action 21 has been really flexible so I've been able to take on a workshare at the farm, helping out every Wednesday morning and then getting my veg bag for free! And the socials are great fun, can't wait for the belated summer solstice - thanks Bruce!"



We'd also like to say a big Welcome to the World and Canalside community to wee Endelyon Esyld, who was born to friends and members Helen & Keir Mitchell back in April. Endelyon's older sister and brother, Nolwyn and Cwilyn, have been fantastic older siblings, making her feel very welcome with their love and hugs. May your life be blessed with health and happiness and we look forward to seeing you grow and blossom over the coming years.

...and departures



Our longest standing workshare volunteer, Ali Jeffery, who has been with us since August 2007, is off to travel the world for 6 months as of the beginning of July and we're going to miss her HUGELY. Ali has become a good friend and a central part to the Canalside growing team – her energy and enthusiasm will be missed out in the fields almost as much as I'm sure as it will be in the primary school classrooms across Warwick she's also leaving behind. We wish Ali all our love and safe journey blessings – may you have many exciting adventures and heart warming encounters. We look forward to hearing all your travelling tales on your return in January and to giving you a big welcome home.

The biggest change in the people side of Canalside this year is undoubtedly the news of our main grower, Danny, leaving both the project and the area to set up home in Devon with his wife, Meg, and two beautiful girls Ruth and Esme. Danny has been instrumental in the creation and development of Canalside and has provided the growing team with an amazing input of knowledge, wisdom and energy since 2006. He will be missed massively by all of us here that have been lucky to both work alongside him and get to know him personally over the last few years, and it's going to be a challenge finding someone to replace him. Meg and the girls leaving will also create a huge hole in all our personal lives (and mine especially!) – the evolvement of the project



has created a bond between all of us that will remain forever, and we hope they will come back to visit us often. We wish you all very much love and luck for your new life in Devon and hope that it brings you much happiness, peace and fulfilment.

For your interest, at the end of the newsletter is the job advert for our main grower vacancy – please pass it on to anyone you know who might be interested in applying!

building project

Well things certainly don't progress just as you think they might with big projects like this! Over the last couple of months it's been an interesting process of thinking through where Canalside is at as a CSA and what it is we need to prioritise most in the coming months and years.

Firstly, the exciting news is that we have been granted funding to put up a small building dedicated to housing two composting toilets and hand washing facilities. A design for the building was put together by Dan Britton, comprising of a timber frame and including some cob walls. On the roof we hope to have a solar thermal system to provide hot running water for the wash hand basins! This will mean a big step forward for us in terms of basic facilities on site. The plan is to involve members as much as possible in the building process through workshops. A timetable will be worked out and we'll keep you informed.

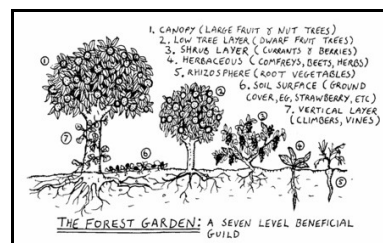
We also have the geodome that has been refined and re-sited to beside the fire circle within the social area below the polytunnels. The geodome is going to be developed as the covered space for use during the social events and there is lots of possibility for how it could be used in the future as part of the project.

With the realisation of just how big a task designing, funding and constructing a whole new building is going to be, we've made the decision to focus our attentions for the time being on developing the site in the ways described above. Certainly building the toilet block will be a major job in itself and when it is complete and the social area has been developed alongside it, we may be better positioned to contemplate a more permanent building to replace the yurt.

The yurt has been an essential element of Canalside since we began two years ago. It has been on loan to the project from Tom and Caz throughout this period. Being a fairly temporary structure it gets its share of wear and tear and therefore we'll be looking over the coming months to doing some running repairs to it. We'll also look at whether we can use the space we already have inside the yurt better and even seeing if re-siting the yurt to better accommodate the storage and distribution of the veg would be worthwhile.

fruit field - by Tom

We'll we had a fantastic weekend designing our new fruit forest garden / orchard with permaculture designer Patrick Whitefield back in April. Around ten members gathered on the farm to discuss the myriad of possibilities for this pioneering project. Patrick facilitated the discussion, gently steering us all through the pros and cons of the different elements of design. This included the potential site as well as the actual structure of the fruit forest garden itself.



We decided as a group that Canalside wanted to plant an orchard that would be entirely resilient to pest and disease and not ever have the need to spray the fruit. This is still the case in orchards around the country - even in organic orchards, which still use permitted sprays on a regular basis to control pest and disease build up. To get round this we will have to plant a very wide range of trees in the orchard and at a wider spacing than usual

so as to let good air flow through the site. This will mean that there will be a huge range of unusual fruit trees as well as the more familiar apples, pears and plums.

In between the rows of top fruit will be planted a wide range of soft fruit and it will be this that we'll be seeing a return from soonest. The top fruit will obviously take a few years before we'll have anything significant to harvest. Hopefully in our second season though there will be a small amount of soft fruit to pick and enjoy!

So... we're now looking for ways to fund this exciting new arm of Canalside. We've applied to the Big Lottery Local Food Fund and are now waiting to hear whether we'll progress to the second stage. It's now a matter of refining the design so that we can submit detailed funding bids and hopefully get on with the first stages of planting this coming winter.

general information



La Jimena is a CSA based just to the south of Granada in southern Spain producing olive oil, olives, citrus fruits, almonds and figs. The great thing about these guys, though, is that once a year they do a massive delivery to a number of different CSA outlets in the UK, including Stroud CSA and Earthshare up in Scotland. As such, we are very interested in finding out how many Canalside members may be interested in receiving a 'fruitshare box' from La Jimena – if enough people are up for it, we could place an order for delivery in February 2010. It is possible to order the following

things:

- ~ 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.

Would you be interested in taking up this offer? If so, **please get in touch and let us know!** You do have plenty of time – for delivery at the end of February next year, we need to place our order by the beginning of the same month – but it would be great to get an idea of how many boxes or litres of olive oil we are talking so we can check the viability with the guys who run it.

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

"SUMMER TIME AND THE SOCIALS ARE EASY"

Caz asked me to write a few words about the last couple of socials (Spring Equinox and Beltane). Certain elements of these days blur into one: the gorgeous weather, the superb turn out (60+ people), the



quality of the food offerings, and the willingness of people to muck in and help out. Special thanks are due to Ali, Helen, Rebecca and friends for organising craft activities (egg painting in March and wreath-making in May), to Kristoff for his magic show, and to all those musicians who brought along their instruments and brightened the days even more. This musical input is something I'm particularly keen on. The Beltane social saw the



creation of a Canalside "scratch band". We had guitars, flutes, djembes and more playing "The Fires of Beltane" as we all danced merrily around our newly-crowned May King and Queen (thanks Caz and Marc for being such good sports - you looked splendid in your crowns!)



The summer solstice social is happening on **Saturday 27 June** (a week after the actual solstice) from 10-4. We have a couple of new developments: the lovely geodesic dome built by Dan and friends (the same one that doubled as the Solar Cinema at the Peace Festival) has become the official Canalside Social Shelter Tent, and has been moved down below the polytunnels. The clay oven (also built by the multi-talented Dan) will be moved down to join the dome in time for the 27th, and Ali and friends will be running a "Sunny Pizza-making Workshop" from 11-12ish. All welcome to participate.

Musicians please bring your accordions, guitars, flutes, drums etc. and we'll get a jam going. While I won't be teaching any circle dances this time, I have an excellent book of short circle dance tunes from around the world. Maybe we can learn a few of these to share at future events?

Everyone at Canalside Community Food is excited about the inaugural Canalside Ceilidh on Saturday 19 Sept (see advert below). All the elements are in place: we have a splendid marquee, a band of excellent folk musicians, fine local ale, and a wodge of tickets to sell to you, dear Canalside member. **Tickets will go on sale on 27th June at the solstice social** - please don't forget your cash. As well as being a fun evening, the ceilidh is a fundraiser, so we encourage you to buy extra tickets and invite your extended friends and family. This could also be an excellent way to recruit new veg-share members. Thank you in advance for your support.

Come and join in the fun

CANALSIDE CEILIDH, 19 SEP '09



7 'til midnight

Adults: £8 (£5 Canalside members), Children £3 (£2 members), Under 5s are free
Ticket includes a glass of wine/ale/juice from the Canalside Ceilidh Bar. Please bring a pudding to

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 27 June	Summer Solstice
Saturday 1 August	Lammas/Harvest Festival
Saturday 19 September	Canalside ceilidh!
Saturday 31 October	Samhain/Halloween
Saturday 19 December	Winter Solstice

And here is the classified job advert we recently put out – please do forward this on to anyone you know who may be interested:

Canalside Community Food, a pioneering CSA based outside Leamington Spa, is looking for a new grower! We are seeking an experienced grower to join our team producing organic vegetables throughout the year for our community of over 100 members. We currently have 7 acres of field scale vegetables and 5 polytunnels for protected cropping and are looking to start up a fruit field/forest garden in the winter. The new grower will also share responsibility for organising and leading volunteer work mornings and take a role in the overall management and direction of the project. Full time position desirable, but will consider part-time or job share. £8 per hour (with a view to increasing this over time). Email Caz at mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk for more details and a full job



Canalside Community Food, Leasowe Farm, Southam Road, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire, CV31 1TY t: **01926 423939** e: mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk
w: www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk blog: <http://canalsidecommunityfood.blogspot.com/>