



Millfield potato plot and site in sunshine!

THINGS ARE BUSY at Canalside as the growing season ramps up, and new projects and ideas start to come together! It's really brought home to me when I put together a newsletter just how much is going on, because here it is, all laid out in black and white! Read about how the growers are preparing for the summer growing season in Will's **News from the Field** and what's happening in the **Fruit Field** as Gareth gets things ready for the start of a seven-month fruit share. There's lots planned for the infrastructure of the site this summer and another visit on the **Education Project** coming up – find out how to get involved in those

activities if you'd like to. Read news from Caz about our most recent **Social** as well as a reminder about the next one. In addition to all the news, there are the usual sections for members' notices and small ads. With so much going on, I hope you will feel like joining in with something, whether that be getting your hands dirty in the field or social area or bringing your dancing shoes down for a bit of do-si-do'ing at the barn dance!

Ali, April 2012

NEWS FROM THE FIELD – by Will Johnson

On Saturday 14th April we had a spring farm walk (open to members and non-members) and the soup that I made was a symbol of the self-sufficiency of Canalside Community Food. Apart from the oil (La Jimena) and the salt (the sea...), all of the ingredients were from the farm. I browned a few leeks and onions, added lots of beetroot and loads of squash, a couple of dried chillies, a fistful of coriander, a few sprigs of sage, some water. I cooked it for a few hours, mashed it up a bit, and then added a pan of borlotta beans (that I'd soaked over night and boiled for 45 minutes). Twas simple, and, I'm *told*, very nice to eat.



Harvesting purple sprouting broccoli

Anyway, the clocks moved forward at the end of March and suddenly we became very busy. Fortunately there is a lot of daylight each day to bite into the endless 'to do' list.

In the tunnels the winter salads are saying farewell; pak choi, tatsoi, land cress, spinach (though there's new spinach on its way), purslane all going to seed. We had to clear the purslane pronto as it self-seeds so prolifically - it is not nice to rip a plant up when it is still so eager to go on but we would end up a purslane CSA instead of a veg CSA if we acted any less brutally...

There are tunnel crops from the autumn that are just getting going though, like coriander, chard, endive, sorrel, spring greens, and we've not even started picking the spring onions yet. We will need them soon though, as stored veg - onions and beetroot especially - are running low and looking tired. In the fields, too, PSB is coming to an end and we are now very low on leeks, parsnips (two things we've had to be frugal with anyway, due to poor yields) and we've fewer than a month's worth of carrots left.

The middle of April to the middle of June is very much a transitional phase in terms of what goes into the share. At the moment we have a lot of the autumn harvest still available; potatoes, onions, beetroot, squash, plus beans and chillies that we dried, and we have crops that have stood in the field all winter to pick; purple sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers, leeks, carrots, parsnips. By mid-June we will have none of these things. The stored veg will spoil as the weather gets warmer (even softer potatoes..!) and what's left

in the field will go to seed. It would be possible to hold onto the squash (for a bit longer) and the dried chillies and beans (for a lot longer) as the warm weather doesn't affect them in the same way, but they will go into the share when the share is at its leanest at the end of May/beginning of June.

Although the tunnels allow us to grow exotic crops like tomatoes and cucumbers, an even more important role they play is for us to bring crops on quickly in the spring and fill in the late spring/early summer 'hungry gap': as stored veg and field veg become thin on the ground we can harvest small batches of potatoes, carrots, sugar snap peas, beetroot, spring onions and a variety of leaves (spinach, rocket, lettuce etc) until the early crops outside like broad beans and potatoes are ready.

It's not all good news though – the early cucumbers have really struggled with the hot days and cold nights (errr, pretty normal April weather...) and most have died, so they won't be as early as last year due to having to start again with them.



The potatoes, 'tucked up' in the largest polytunnel

It's safe to say the share will look a bit leaner for a few weeks but one benefit of that is that we have



Duncan, Nicky and Edward marking out for the onion planting



Many little hands help to plant the onions in March

fewer things to harvest and more time for the growers, workshares and volunteers to do all the planting, weeding and ground preparation that is needed at this time of year.

FRUIT FIELD – by Gareth Davies

The orchard is beginning to wake up from winter despite the see-sawing temperatures and conditions from a hot dry March to a cold wet April! The cherries and plums are in blossom and beginning to grow while the apples and pears are blossoming in sequence with the later varieties still to come. Much of the soft fruit has also begun to put on leaf growth and the currents are flowering. We have also begun to harvest our rhubarb with the early variety (aptly named Timperley Early!) putting on plenty of growth to start supplying fruit shares. You are welcome to come up and walk around the orchard and have a look when you pick up your veg and see the variety that will be available when our fruit shares begin to fill out later in the year. (See below if you want to take a share!)

With spring comes weeding and mulching and we have begun to weed those areas where couch and other invasive perennials are growing and filling in any bare patches with a layer of straw to stop (or at least slow down) any further growth. We will also be introducing the fruit workshare scheme from late May/early June when we are anticipating the work will pick up as we begin to harvest soft fruit. (This will work in much the same way as our veg workshare scheme.) We have had a lot of interest in this and we have filled the three places from people responding to previous newsletters so if you are interested you will need to contact Ali to go on the waiting list for a workshare.

We are now offering fruit shares from early summer (June) so if you want to enjoy fresh seasonal fruit with your veg, prepare to sign up for a fruit share! Shares will cost £25 per month and we should have a good range of soft (raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, currants) and top (apples, plums etc) fruit

over the season. We will again supplement the top fruit by asking members to donate any surplus fruit they have growing at home which we will come around and collect. We aim to supply fruit up to the end of November although we may be able to extend this to Christmas and beyond if we receive a lot of offers of fruit and can arrange adequate storage. Sign up online by completing the fruit share sign up form at: <http://www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk/the-produce/fruit/sign-up-for-a-fruit-share/> or fill in a leaflet when you pick up your veg and put it in Ali's blue pigeon hole in the yurt.

Finally the best suggestion we have so far received for the tree in the centre of the orchard (row G, space 9 if you want to find the spot!) is an apple tree to which we will graft branches of all the other apple varieties to give a multi-variety tree. However any other suggestions still welcome!

Gareth

Spring Palette

The first blossoms sweep across the valley,

Painting it the colours of spring.

Almond – first flowered; first fallen,

Until its petals cover the ground like a sprinkling of snow. When these trees are thick with cotton wool,

Apricot follows swiftly

Where white petals,

Tinted into rose by the vivid sepals,

Flutter from the tangle of branches,

Leaving space between the pink

For tender green leaves.

Cherry and greengage bloom next.

Both show as a cloud of petals,

Fluffy white, yet distinct:

Cherry, the cash crop.

Leaning boughs stretch in all directions

Above the fresh, wheat shoots

And in the dirt-floored yards.

Greengage branches grow only skyways,

Slender and straight; uncomplicated in their pattern.

Peach paints its branches pretty with pink.

A deeper hue; a darker fruit –

The stone a light load for the deep flesh.

Large delicately toned blooms give way

To a small, white fleshed bounty,

The hard heart an unfair size for its bearer.

Apple, last of the tree blossoms, is the sweetest,

Filling the village with its perfume,

And the only one to welcome its blooms

Into a bower of green, cradled by smooth branches.

Ali Jeffery, Spring 2005

I wrote this poem when I was living and working in the Hunza valley in Northern Pakistan. As an important fruit growing area, which exports much of this produce, the blossom season is a sight to behold and attracts tourists from all over the world with the Japanese in particular coming at this time of year. Living and working with locals allowed me to find out which trees were which, and to notice how different the blossoms and tree shapes were for the different types of fruit. Our fruit orchard gives me happy memories of that time, although of course it's on a slightly smaller scale! As I didn't include pear in my poem for some reason, you'll have to carry out your own investigations of the orchard to find out what pear blossom is like!

Ali

DEPARTURES



We are sad to say goodbye to *Sarah, Steven and Finlay Hunt* who have been veg members of the project since its first year, back in 2007. They have been active participants in project socials and the annual barn dance/ceilidh, giving much valued help in preparing food and clearing up after things. Steven has also been a regular feature of our fire circle, sitting by the fire with his accordion or his guitar and creating a very enjoyable musical atmosphere! As they will continue to be social



Steven and Sarah

members, we hope to see them from time-to-time at future socials (and especially at the barn dance!), but given that a journey from Scotland is quite lengthy, we probably won't be seeing them as regularly as in the past! I'm sure you'll join with me in wishing them all the best as they settle into work and a new home up in Glasgow.



Abbie driving our tractor

working with everyone and is going to be looking for something similar to get involved with in York. Abbie has been particularly inspirational in her work to establish Social Sundays, to work on developing the social area at Canalside. These will continue during the summer, and by the time Abbie leaves, should have developed enough momentum to keep going.

We have another departure coming up too – Abbie, our grower, will leave later in the summer, to move to York with her boat. She will be embarking on a Law degree, starting in the autumn, at York University. Although she is fulfilling a long-standing dream, she will miss her job here – she told me she has really enjoyed meeting and



Members making plans for the social area at the first Social Sunday

SITE DEVELOPMENTS – by Tom Ingall

With the help of many folk over the weekends leading up to and during the Spring social, a living willow dome and tunnel 'complex' has been planted! This is the beginning of our dedicated play area. If you're a 'big kid' or are enticed into the tunnels by a rogue child, beware of the trip strings that they have



Planting the willow – early March



The tunnel, already woven in late March

installed! The structure will take root over the season and grow long shoots that will then be able to be woven back into the tunnels and domes so it's an on going process.

During the Wednesday work mornings through February our new compost bays took shape and now contain the first of their precious contents which is being processed into black gold. These six impressive

bays should provide plenty of space to process all our own compostable waste as well as being able to experiment with producing our own seed composts and leaf moulds.

Plans for the rest of the site have also begun to evolve for the coming year. Progress has been slow in relation to the possibility of building our replacement to the yurt – this



Workshare, Dave Jones, preparing the trench for a compost bay



The completed bank of composting bays

has been due to the organisation we've been in communication with about facilitating the build being held up on their current projects. This leaves us with the opportunity to continue with several of the other on-going projects on site. These include a revamp on the geodome kitchen, finishing the treebog, creating a workshop from the railway carriage that has been stuck in the carpark for the last year (at least!), and adding walls and gutters to the pole barn! Phew, not too much to get on with then. I'm currently looking into materials for extending the pole barn in the coming months to create our very own dedicated fruit and veg storage barn. We currently use space in the Leasowe Farm barn which has worked very well, but this barn has ultimately been built to store cereal crops grown on the farm. So look out for opportunities to get involved with any or all of these projects around the site soon!

EDUCATION PROJECT – by Ali Jeffery

The new season for schools' visits is getting going! Having publicised our education project to all the local primary schools in Leamington and Warwick, we have had interest expressed by a few different heads and class teachers. So far we have one visit booked for the morning of Monday 21st May, for which I will need some volunteers to help the event run smoothly. Please drop me an email if you are free that day and would like to help out with a class of Reception children (4-5 years old) during their time at the project. I will also be preparing the project site in the afternoon of Sunday 20th May, so please let me know if you could help me with that too.

On Thursday 19th April, I was invited to a meeting of the Rural East Community Forum to talk about how the funding we received for our education project was used. Bernie Allen, the policy and projects officer on the Community and Partnership Team at Warwick District Council, has been really pleased with how the community forum funded year of the education project has gone, especially as we have secured funding to continue the project without the community forum's support. She wanted to share this with those at the community forum as an example of what can be achieved with projects that receive community forum funding.

Wanted for education project visits: sturdy, round, plastic tubs with or without handles (of the kind that might contain 1kg yogurt, flapjack/meringues etc); **lanyards and clear, plastic, name tag holders** (e.g from a conference or other event). Please leave in a bag on the counter under the pigeon-holes, labelled 'For Ali'. Also: **loan of leather punch with a variety of sized holes possible** – please contact me if you have one you could lend before 20th May

SOCIALS – by Caz Ingall

With all this seemingly unstoppable rain, all that beautiful sunshine we had in February and March is now starting to seem like a distant dream. But then us farmers are never happy... It's doing the farm as a whole a world of good, and it feels as though things are growing as I stand and watch them.

Thinking back to the Spring social, I can remember another nice day (we almost always seem to get

lucky), with a great turn out of folk once more. The field workers got busy clearing the ditch and sorting out the rabbit fencing, whilst the dedicated cooking team got an impressive amount of veg soup simmering away on the fire. The tribe of kids running around the site seems to expand and diversify with each social - favourite games at the moment seem to be pushing each other around in wheelbarrows/veg trolleys and booby-trapping the new willow tunnel! The inventiveness of what our wee ones can come up with always seriously impresses me.

From my perspective, everything just seemed to work so smoothly, everyone getting on with what needed doing. It's so brilliant to see people feeling more and more comfortable in the space here, with more of the things that need doing being spread around more folk. Massive thank yous again to everyone that lent a hand on the day, from those folk who spent hours (literally) working on the ditch/fence, to everyone involved in cooking/cleaning/general site maintenance. You're all brilliant and, needless to say, these days wouldn't happen without you.

If you haven't been down to a social for a while (or ever) then you **MUST** at least come to our annual fundraising ceilidh, the date for which this year is **Saturday 7th July**. It's always brilliant fun, and a great evening out for all the family. More info on that coming soon.. but at least get the date in your diaries!

Look forward to seeing some of you in the coming weeks... Caz x

WANTED! Testimonials for the Canalside website

Do you have a story to tell about being part of the project: Scepticism overcome – yours or children's? Healthy eating kick-started? Cooking habits changed? Money saved? Perception of where your food comes from revolutionised? New skills or interests? Or anything else! If so, we'd love it if you could send it in for inclusion on the website in a yet-to-be-developed testimonials section – it's just waiting for some testimonials to go in it! Please submit your story to Ali, by email on the project admin address: mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk. I will take submission of your testimonial as agreement to having your first name and town/village published online with the testimonial.

CANALSIDE COMMUNITY BEES

Tell 'em about the honey (mummy)! by Kath Pasteur

No, it's not an article about Sugar Puffs (sorry if you didn't watch ITV in the 80s), it's about the new Bee Club starting right here at Canalside! Canalside Community Bees is a CSA, but it stands for Community Supported **Apiculture**! It is a separate enterprise to Canalside Community Food but run along similar lines. We invite you to join through a membership fee now, at the start of the beekeeping year, so that we can collectively buy hives, suits, veils and other equipment. Through the year you can get involved to whatever extent you want in managing the bees, building hives, planting bee friendly flowers, and harvesting honey (yum!). We will also organise talks and films about bees and beekeeping in the UK and abroad. And we will run practical workshops on using different hive products (candlemaking, baking, lipbalms etc). In addition you can join up as a Honey Share member to get a 10 jar share of the honey at harvest time. Additional honey will be sold by the jar to general members. The number of Honey Shares will be limited in this first year to 15. It's very hard to predict how much honey we will harvest but we hope there will be plenty for everyone who wants it!



Founding members at the apiary

We have already started holding regular apiary visits. The next is on Sat May 5th 1.30pm, so join the club and come meet the bees! We will be holding a launch AGM on Wednesday 16th May, 7.30pm at Bath Place when we will talk about our plans and our progress so far, gather more ideas from members, and show the film "The Vanishing of the Bees". Come and let us know how you want to be involved!

For more information check out our blog at CanalsideCommunityBees.blogspot.co.uk, or email us at canalsidecommunitybees@yahoo.co.uk for a membership form.

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.

★ ★ ★

Thank you so much for your generous support of my fund-raising for Save the Children. My hair is now its new length, as you can see here – a bit of a change, I think you'll agree! I have raised £1100.17 to date, with £235 of that being contributed by Canalside members! Such a fantastic amount will make a massive difference in the lives of deprived children in the UK and around the world. Thank you if you have helped to provide better health care, education, resilience to climate change and much more. If you haven't yet made a contribution and would still like to, please go to <http://www.justgiving.com/ali-big-charity-chop>



★ ★ ★

On the 13th May, Mark Williamson, community member and also designer of the new Canalside website is doing the Fred Whitton Challenge (a 112-mile, 1-day cycle ride around all of the Lake District's highest passes) in aid of Castel Froma - a brain injury specialist care centre in Leamington. It would be fantastic if you would be able to sponsor him a small amount to help him achieve his £500 target.

Visit www.justgiving.com/markiewilliamson if you'd like to pledge a donation. Thank you!

★ ★ ★

Announcing: Foundry Wood

Foundry Wood is a new community woodland in Leamington Spa. It is a triangle of land between the two railway lines as they leave Leamington station and Princes Drive. ARC-CIC have funds to make the site accessible to the public and develop it to promote wildlife and education. We will be holding regular work days over the coming year to clear brambles, put in pathways, plant trees, dig a pond etc. At the moment the site is not safe to access unsupervised so volunteering is the best way to come and see it and suggest how you would like to see it evolve.



Please check the website arccic.co.uk for more details, join the Facebook Group "Foundry Wood" or ask Canalside members Kath Pasteur (kath@arccic.co.uk) and Kristie Naimo (kristie@arccic.co.uk) for more information or to be put on the mailing list.

★ ★ ★

******* PLANT SALE *******

Offchurch Garden Club annual plant sale at The Stag at Offchurch on Saturday 12th May 10am – midday
Enquiries Jane Ingall 07747 753799

★ ★ ★

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.

★ ★ ★



IYENGAR YOGA

Every Monday 7.30 – 9.00 p.m at

**North Leamington School, Sandy lane, Blackdown,
Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6RD**

**If you are looking to do safe yoga to increase your stamina and flexibility
then contact Diana Harris: - 0791 786 1939**

Beginners Welcomed

Wear loose clothing / bring mat if you have one.

Cost: - £30.00 for 5 consecutive classes or £7.00 drop in rate.

★ ★ ★

Please see back page for more small ads.

☆☆☆

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

☆☆☆



ELECTRICAL SERVICES

- ~ INSTALLATION
- ~ LIGHTING & EXTRA SOCKETS
- ~ REPAIRS
- ~ PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING

Electrician & Handyman

Electrical and property maintenance
(ELEC SA registered)

ELEC SA

Painting and decorating

Lawn mowing and edging, hedge cutting, weeding and garden clearance

Graham Williams 01926 431129 email: grahamwilliams3@btinternet.com

☆☆☆

NEW CIRCLE DANCE CLASS Come and join a friendly group dancing to amazing folk music from Greece, Macedonia, Israel, Bulgaria, France and beyond. Learn simple steps and dances that have been enjoyed by communities for thousands of years. Circle Dancing can be fun and lively, beautiful, slow and meditative, and always uplifting. Sessions will be led by Bruce Knight, who has 12 years experience facilitating groups and workshops. 9-week course: 3 May – 5 July 2012 (no class on 7 June), Thursday afternoons, 1:30–3pm, Leamington Spa, Cost £54. For more information, and to book your place, please email bruceknight.voice@virgin.net, or telephone 01926 778454.



☆☆☆

Leamington Acupuncture Community Clinic

'Healing in the Heart of the Community'

Lower ground floor, The Polish Centre, 54 High St, Leamington CV31 1LW

Offering you Affordable Acupuncture treatments in a multibed setting

Initial Diagnosis and treatment £20

Follow up treatments £15

Wednesdays

Appointments available: 9am- 7.30pm

Or just drop in and see us between 10.30am and 2.30pm



If you are suffering from an acute injury, a chronic condition, are low on energy or just want to keep healthy- give us a call to see how acupuncture can help you.



All practitioners are fully qualified and members of the BAcC.

Call us on: 07999779219

www.acupuncturecommunityclinic.co.uk

BACC Member
www.acupuncture.org.uk



☆☆☆☆☆

Canalside Community Food, Leasowe Farm, Southam Road, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1TY. t: **07758 340491** e: mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk w: www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk