



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

SPRING 2014

newsletter no. 31



Cherry blossom in the fruit orchard

I'M FEELING THE SWITCH *from winter to spring as I eat the very last of my La Jimena oranges this week, and the appearance of ducklings on the canal and the spectacular blossom we've had already this year heighten that feeling. This newsletter also has a very spring-like feel to it, with news of planting and propagating in **News from the Field** from Will and blossom in abundance in Gareth's update from the **Fruit Field**. Read about up-and-coming events that you can get involved with over the coming weeks, especially in Tom's **Site Developments** and also in the news about the **Education Project** and **Events**. We have a number of small and full-sized*

*arrivals to welcome to Canalside. Find out how, as a member, you can **use the social area** too. As always there are updates from our partner projects: **Canalside Community Bees** and **The Willows Care Farm**, with **Members' Notices** and **Small Ads** in their usual spot right at the back. I hope you're enjoying the sunshine, when it chooses to appear, as well as the other joys of spring! Happy reading!*

Ali, April 2014

NEWS FROM THE FIELD – by Will Johnson

We are in that period of transition where the stores are



Give peas a chance, helped to grow upwards by a bit of netting

emptying and we only have a few weeks left of 2013's produce: potatoes, onions, beetroot and squash from the storerooms, carrots, parsnips, leeks and swede from the fields. At the same time a lot of the spring crops are up, established and nearly old enough to fend for themselves, yet



Tomato seedlings at 7 weeks old

a good few weeks (or months, in some cases) from harvest. We have had most of the purple sprouting broccoli for the year now, though the overwintered cauliflowers still promise a good return for the next month or so.

The springing of the season is magnified in the tunnels and it is that time of year when a cut crop (true spinach, say) can regrow and be ready for another harvest in as little as ten days. The

spring glut of leaves is a bit earlier this year but since the summer crops (tomatoes, peppers etc.) are steaming away in their pots it looks as though we'll be needing that space sooner rather than later anyway. Early batches of new potatoes, carrots and sugar snap peas are looking great too.

At the risk of being a jinx, the first part of 2014 is going very well. Our plant raising (yes, we do like to multi-task!) is going smoother



Seeds potatoes ready to go in the ground



Setting the cucumbers off up their strings

than ever. This is down to a combination of factors – good weather, better facilities (insulated greenhouse, solar-power supply), and the simple fact that we're learning from previous mistakes and getting better at it (being a grower is about a lot more than harvesting!). We're taking steps to further improve by experimenting with making our own growing medium (A.K.A. potting compost/substrate) mainly from green waste that we can get from Pershore landfill site. If it is viable it will mean we will be more self-sufficient and resilient as a food producer. I doubt we will ever be able to create something comparable to the excellent, user-friendly product we currently use (peat-based Klassman from Germany) but since it is made using peat (widely viewed as unethical) and produced all the way over in Germany we feel it is our responsibility to find an alternative.



Grow leeks, grow!

This year's one-month old seedlings next to 13-month old siblings - the huge one at the front is a good example for them to aspire to!



The onion sets, already shooting

We have started outdoor planting and it looks like we'll be watering this week (ironic, given how wet the winter was – we really should start catching all this rain). Thanks to all who helped with onion planting. The last onion went in on Wednesday 2nd April and all the maincrop potatoes went in the next day which gets us off to a fantastic start. The onions are rooted and shooting already. If I hadn't noticed bad slug damage to our early broad beans (around

one third of them gone without trace, sadly) I would be tempted to say we are off to a dream start.

Finally, to those of you that saw me starting asparagus seeds off on Saturday (12th): don't get excited, the earliest harvest we can hope for will be 2017!

Will, 14th April 2014

FRUIT FIELD – *by Gareth Davies*

It is the season of rhubarb once again! We hope that those of you who take a fruit share are enjoying the new season's first crop. Don't forget that you can always freeze rhubarb as a treat for later in the year if you are having trouble getting through it all right now. Let us know your ideas for any good recipes or storing tips through our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/149186125282409/>.



The first rhubarb picking of the season

Thanks to everyone who came up to the blossom walk on what turned out to be a beautiful sunny afternoon. The plum blossom was beginning to fade but the pear and cherry blossom was at its height and promises a good crop (if the frost holds off for the next month!). At the time of writing the apples are just beginning to flower and soon all the trees will be in leaf as well. Those of you who came on the walk will have seen that we have begun work to put in a groundcover layer in the orchard and to give it more of a permaculture feel. To that end we have started to establish various plants under the trees (including strawberries, comfrey, thymes, mint and sage) that will hopefully begin to thrive and provide a range of useful herbs and fruits over the coming years. We are also experimenting with replacing the grass between some rows with similar useful plants like comfrey and ground raspberries that will reduce the management time needed. It should also make the orchard a wildlife (and especially bee) friendly place. It's perhaps a good time to join the bee club as their bees will be foraging in the orchard!



We are encouraging more veg members to sign up for a fruit supplement over the coming year so please contact Ali if you are interested in doing this. All members should have received our



The view down the hill to the fruit orchard

chart with the estimates of what will be in the fruit share over the year and we are currently charging £25 per month (or £300 for the year). If you haven't already seen this, please pick up a letter from fruit part of the counter in the collection space. Do let us have your opinions about the fruit and fruit share as we need to ensure that our income for fruit is sustainable now that the grant funding has finished.

Gareth, 22nd April 2014

NEW ARRIVALS...

It's been another busy time for small Canalside arrivals! We have three to welcome to our community this time. First on the scene was the first child for members *Cynthia and Adam Tamraz* who greeted *Amara Mireille* when she arrived Earthside on 7th February. She weighed in at just 2.36kg. They're thankful that she's proving to be a pretty good sleeper!



Amara Tamraz



Joshua Lucas

Next to arrive was *Joshua* who was finally united with his parents, *Claire and Mike Lucas*, on 23rd February after five long days, weighing 8lb 1oz!

And the third of the trio was *Dominik Marcus* who arrived on 5th March weighing 10lb 6oz. He joins his big brother Noah and parents *Emma and Philipp Stummer*. Emma is grateful to

everyone for their help in carrying her veg share to the car when she collects on Wednesdays!

We wish these babies long and happy lives, nourished in their early days by fabulous Canalside veg and the supportive Canalside community!

The past three months have seen a handful of new members join us too. We welcome the following people to Canalside:

• *Nigel Perry and family* • *Olga and John Sawyer* • *Brendan Hickling and family* •

Although both were already members, we are pleased to have *Rebecca Knight* and *Ben Cowan* join the growing team as the newest workshares. I'll take this opportunity to thank all our fantastic workshares for the massive amount of hard work that they put in supporting the growers in their work – without them, many tasks would take so much longer! The growers really appreciate knowing that on particular days they will have a certain number of pairs of hands to help, as it helps with planning what to do in the work mornings.

SITE DEVELOPMENTS – by Tom Ingall

With spring well under way we're getting busy around the site again and remembering why we try and use the quieter winter months to get all of those little (or large!) maintenance jobs done. Some things do need to wait for warmer weather though and one of the last big tasks to complete the work started last year in the pole barn is just one of those. The main dividing straw bale wall that was built last summer, through which you enter the produce collection area, is waiting to be finished. This will require a clay render to be mixed and applied to the straw, so that the wall is protected for the long-term but still able to breathe. It will hopefully be a fun task that anybody can muck in with. So, if you'd like to get your hands into some sticky clay, help with this fun job and learn a bit more about straw bale walls, clay renders and natural building in general come and join us! Pencil in the weekend of 7th/8th June and look out for more information closer to the time.

EDUCATION PROJECT – by Ali Jeffery

The new season is getting going in all aspects of work at the farm, and this is also true for the education project. Our new fliers that were distributed to every primary school in Leamington

and Warwick generated quite a few enquiries and we now have our first visit of the year booked for the morning of Monday 12th May. If you would like to help facilitate the visit for a class of Year 3 children (7-8 year olds) from Lillington, please get in touch with Ali – mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk.

We would still welcome further visits. If you would like to encourage your child's class teacher to arrange for their class to make a free visit of 2+ hours to Canalside, please take a flier from the collection space.

Visits of 2+ hours can also be arranged for any non-school group that includes under 16s, such as Rainbow, Brownie or Guide groups, Beaver, Cub or Scout groups, youth clubs. If you work with such a group, please get in touch to discuss a visit, or if your child is a member of such a group, please take one of the education visit fliers which will give the group leader all the contact details they need.



Children, on a previous year's visit, find out which creatures help make compost

SOCIALS – by Ali Jeffery

The blooming season gives extra vitality to social events, and the recent activities have been well attended by enthusiastic members:

March – spring social and onion planting:

Spring social and onion planting – Sat 29th March – huge thank yous to everyone who came to help plant out this year's onion sets. The planting was completed in record time – just 2 work mornings, helping to get the season off to a



The work party for planting out the onions



really good start. A group of children who had put in some great work planting onions, took part in a walk to explore the site and find evidence of the changing season to attach to a 'Journey Stick'. And all this fresh air and activity was rounded off with some delicious beetroot soup, made by Gareth, and supplemented by everyone's tasty contributions to the lunch table.

April – blossom social in the orchard:



We were blessed with a beautiful, sunlit afternoon for appreciating the pear and cherry blossom in the orchard, though all were glad of the fire and hot tea to warm hands!



It was interesting to see different groups of people coming to enjoy tea and cake amidst the blossom – the mums with their small babies in the afternoon; the after-work veg share collectors later on.

Dates to come:

Hopefully you already have the key date of the Canalside social calendar in your diary, but if not, get it in there now, and see below for what to expect from this year's event!

Canalside Summer Party - Saturday 5th July, 7.30pm til late

A family friendly event to celebrate all that goes on at Canalside featuring:

Music from 'Canalside Ceilidh Collective' ★ Scottish ceilidh and world circle dancing
Open mic for music, poetry etc ★ Bar with local ales, ciders, fruit juices
Hot food ★ Space for camping

Tickets: members £7.50, non-members £10, under 16s free
On sale from May – further details in the weekly email update

Also in the next few months:

May: Sat 31st – fermented veg workshop in partnership with Action 21's 'Skillshare' programme – find out how to preserve just about any veg through fermentation with Canalside member, Erica Moody. Limited places available – book yours through the link in the weekly email update (where fuller details are also available).

June: Sat 7th / Sun 8th – rendering the straw-bale wall

Sat 14th–Sun 15th – Peace Festival publicity stall – look out for details of how to help

Sat 28th – open day for the general public – tours, picnic in the social area – members welcome too!

USING THE SOCIAL AREA

Now that the infrastructure at Canalside is well developed, we have a great space for our own socials, which members are also welcome to use when the site is open (mainly during collection times and work mornings). Members also sometimes ask about using it for a private event. The steering group is

happy to consider requests for use of the social area for a member's private event, e.g. a birthday party, wedding anniversary or seasonal celebration. The use of the pole barn, social area and geodome is possible, according to availability, in exchange for a donation to Canalside funds. We need to receive full details of your request at least 10 days before you need an answer – this will include preferred date and alternative dates, and size and nature of the event. Please contact Ali for more information – mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk



Barn dancing at last year's summer party

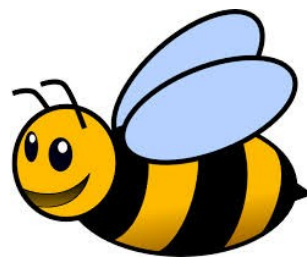


The play area and social area

CANALSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD - PARTNER PROJECTS' UPDATE

Canalside Community Bees, by Kath Pasteur

Canalside Community Bees get busy! The beekeeping season is just getting started so things will get busier in the bee club from now on. All our colonies made it through this mild winter and have been bringing in lots of pollen and are even making some honey! Yay! The rape is flowering all around so as long as the days are warm there is no shortage of honey-making material - the bees just love that stuff!



In early April we had a good turnout to tidy the apiary and weed the nectar garden. The next meeting is Sat 3rd May 2-5pm when we will set up some bait hives in case our colonies decide to swarm. Hopefully the weather will be warm and sunny that day and we will take a look inside a hive or two. Come along and learn something new about bees!

Find us on facebook or email canalsidecommunitybees@hotmail.co.uk

The Willows Care Farm

Please come to our
AGM on Tuesday
20th May 2014



@The Willows Cabin, Canalside Community
Food, Leasowe Farm, Radford Semele

Join us for a review and celebration of our first
year, and discussions about the future of The
Willows.

6pm – AGM

7.30pm – Please stay and join us for soup over
the fire. Please bring something small to complement the soup and share with others.

Please contact us for more info :

e: thewillowsproject@gmail.com

m: **07580 787361**

www.thewillowsproject.org.uk



MEMBERS' CORNER Do you have any interesting projects, charity fund-raisers or other not-for-profit activities you'd like to promote to your fellow Canalsiders? If so, then this is the space for your free advert! Get in touch with Ali for advertising in future issues of the newsletter.

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Action 21's property hunt continues

Action 21 is urgently looking to find new premises in the light of the news that its current location has been identified for housing development. The charity is considering a number of options, including one or more smaller sites. Any suggestions would be welcomed - please contact Chairman John Armstrong on [01926 885347](tel:01926885347) or email jarmstrong31@talktalk.net. For more information on Action 21's current situation please visit www.action21.co.uk/blog

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*The SYDNI Centre aims to produce a **Community Recipe Book** to coincide with the Sydenham 50th Anniversary celebrations.*

We'd love to hear about your well-loved recipes (and the stories behind them).

What's a favourite recipe of yours?

What does it mean to you?

How and when did you discover it?

We tell our life stories through the food we eat...

Contact Trevor Humphreys on 01926-422071 or volunteer@sydni.org

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Warwickshire Countrymen's Club:

Are you a retired male, aged 65+ and living alone in Leamington? Or do you know someone who fits these criteria? Are you looking for something active to get involved with? To learn or share gardening/horticultural skills and knowledge, meet new people and be part of a local community? The Willows Project is running a ten week summer scheme in collaboration with Relate and Age UK on Thursday's 10.30am-1.30pm (May 29th - August 7th).

For more details or to book a place, contact Ellie at

thewillowsproject@gmail.com

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Foundry Wood are looking for more people who would like to run nature based art, crafts, or any other kind of fun / educational activities! We do not charge session leaders to use the woodland space. We advertise the activities,

and participants pay directly to the leader on the day. Join our mailing list or find us on facebook www.foundrywood.co.uk

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Link to our Flickr photos for a fuller selection of photos of the past 3 months:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65686573@N02/sets/>

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Next newsletter due out end of July 2013.

Deadline for ads with payment, and notices – Sunday 21st July.

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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

SMALL ADS Do you have any business or money-making ventures you'd like to advertise to other members of Canalside? Then this is the space for you. Please contact Ali for future adverts.

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MULTI-DISCIPLINARY THERAPISTS' SUPERVISION GROUP OPENS!

Our multi-disciplinary supervision group is opening to new members over the next three months. We meet monthly, ten times a year (excluding August and December), usually on a Monday afternoon.

So, if you're a therapist looking for a facilitated, spirited and rich supervision group please contact me at

debbiecollins@dmac.co.uk or read about the

kind of supervision I facilitate at

www.debbiecollins.co.uk

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