



WINTERY WEATHER seems to be sporadic this year, with spells of frosty, biting cold interspersed with milder, wet and wild weather. Find out what this means for the growers and their vegetable charges, in **News from the Field**. Gareth updates us on progress in our orchard, with an insight into how it fares in a winter such as this one, in his **Fruit Field** update. Read about recent changes on site and how they have revolutionised socials in particular, in **Site Changes** by Tom and **Socials** by Caz. We look ahead to 2012 with dates for your diary for the **Canalside Social Calendar**. And if you're unsure about what to do if you can't collect your veg, or have ever wondered how to use the 'extras' box in the yurt, read on for some enlightenment! There are the usual **Members' Corner** and **Small Ads** sections, and a new item this time – a review of a book which members may find of interest. I hope this all gives you some enjoyable reading curled up somewhere warm and some inspiration to come down to the project and get involved in some aspect of it, now or in the near future as the cold weather eases!



Winter salad crops growing well in November

Ali, January 2012

NEWS FROM THE FIELD – by Will Johnson

The daunting task of cleaning all of the polytunnels (well, except the new one...) was met by about 20 of us on Saturday 17th December. As well as getting an important job done to a high standard, it was a chance to sit around the fire and enjoy mince pies and mulled wine. It was another one of those days when a big turn out meant getting an otherwise near-impossible job well and truly ticked off the 'to do' list.



Polytunnel cleaning



Beetroot, in its sand clamp in the farm's barn, ready for use through the winter

As was typical of December the weather that day was pretty mild. It's not until the third week of January that we've had a few hard frosts on consecutive days. I was pleased to record -5°C at the farm on a few occasions this month. The mild winter has meant we're due a really good crop of purple sprouting broccoli (PSB) - coming in big quantities very soon at this rate - and we should have a lot more cauliflowers this spring than we had last year. The caulis will probably come a bit sooner than we'd planned but worry not - we're not going to plough them back in as they have in Devon, due to

them either being 'too big' or the growers having 'no market' for earlier-than-expected brassicas - they'll all be picked. The warm weather has helped the salad in the tunnels on its way, though this does mean that they'll go to seed (and therefore stop producing leaves) earlier than we'd have expected. In the store, the potatoes, beetroot and celeriac are a good six weeks further ahead than last year (the potatoes have had chits on them since October!!!) so all these factors combined could mean a leaner period than usual in the late spring and early summer, but only time will tell.



Polytunnel chillies ready for drying, to be used in the late spring harvesting gap

It's a time now to reflect on the year past and see how we can do better next year with certain crops (parsnips, leeks,

sweetcorn) and also remember what we have done well and build on that. This week I've been getting tunnel space ready for February plantings of peas, carrots and potatoes.

The other big thing at the moment is we're about ready to begin sowing the first transplants in a heated space on the farm. This year, the first year we've decided to do it, we're going to do all of our own plant raising in-house. A big step! We've not built the propagator yet, but by the time you're reading this next week we will have (well, we better have...!).

FRUIT FIELD – *by Gareth Davies*

The trees in the orchard are now in their winter dormancy. Due to the unusually mild winter the leaves seemed to hang on for a long time, until Christmas in some cases, but have now all been blown off by the gales of the last month. We have caged a good proportion of the trees to prevent the muntjac gnawing at the bark in the cold weather and this seems to be working so far although there is also plenty of other grazing available for them this year. We have also replenished the straw mulch where necessary to keep the weeds down and the soil protected (and fed).



Tending the fruit trees

The good news is that with a delivery of trees from the Agroforestry Research Trust we have now planted all the fruit trees in the orchard and in fact only one space remains right in the middle! The trees planted this year included a range of more unusual fruit like juneberry, edible elderberry, rowan and hawthorn as well as some more exotic fruit like a persimmon that may or may not fruit in our climate. We even have small-leaved lime for fresh leaves. You are welcome to come up and walk around the orchard and have a look when you pick up your veg and to make suggestions for what tree we ought to plant in the middle (row G, space 9 if you want to find the spot! You can find it using the end of row markers).

We are proposing to offer fruit shares from the spring or early summer so if you want to enjoy fresh seasonal fruit with your veg, prepare to sign up for a fruit share! Shares are likely to cost £5 per week / £20 per month and we should have a good range of soft fruit (raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, currants) and top fruit (apples, plums etc) over the season. We will again supplement the top fruit by asking members to donate any surplus fruit they have at home, which we will come and collect. We aim to supply fruit up to the end of November although we may be able to extend this if we receive a lot of offers of fruit.



Putting the new apple press through its paces at the Winter social in November

For those who wish to, or already have, donated fruit, and also want us to give advice and help in pruning their fruit trees and bushes, please get in touch with me (Gareth) on fiona@canalsidecommunityfood.org and I will organise to come around at a convenient time. Abbie has also offered her services for any larger jobs on overgrown fruit trees as she is fully qualified to do this.

NEW ARRIVALS...

Helen Mitchell is our latest workshare to join the project team. Here she introduces herself and tells us what motivated her to become a workshare:

We joined Canalside four years ago, and instantly fell in love with the rich sense of community as well as the fantastic fresh veg. Our three home educated children love spending time on the farm and learn so much from the people they meet and the things that they see and do here. They also enjoy chopping and cooking all the lovely veg at home. We've always enjoyed coming to work mornings, small children permitting. Now I feel glad that I can offer something back to a project that means so much to us as a family, and look forward to learning more about growing vegetables too.



Helen Mitchell

...AND DEPARTURES

And moving on to create space for Helen to take up her workshare position was *Tristan Webb* who was a stalwart worker throughout the growing season, having started as a workshare last March. Thanks to him for his hard work and commitment, and as he will remain a veg share member, we hope to see him at socials and work mornings in the future.

SITE DEVELOPMENTS – *by Tom Ingall*

There is already a very exciting feeling to how the Canalside site is going to develop over the course of 2012. Starting at the AGM back in December where those people present put forward a mass of ideas as to how we can take the site forward. Abbie has taken a lead in catalysing those eager to contribute and this started with a discussion and design day early in January. With the start of our 'Social Sundays', we've seen the emergence of the desire for involvement both in the process of decision making and the practical steps needed to create the space we'd all like to see. Keep your eye out for how to get involved especially on Sundays, with notices being posted in the yurt as well as a separate Yahoo group soon to be established to facilitate discussion between those interested.



Nick prepares the entrance steps to the geodome



The geodome in full use at the Winter social in November



The space that we now have to work with really emerged in the early Winter when we finally pulled together the time to relocate our geodome. Due to changes over the last 12-18 months the dome had found itself right in the centre of our new social space. The decision was taken to move it to the edge, consolidating space and creating a much better link up with the pole barn and fire circle. With help from Nick and Guy we built a raised floor and totally changed the covering to allow for plenty of natural light inside.

Continuing with the larger projects on the site, we are again looking at possible long term solutions to replacing our yurt. Discussions have run on and off over the last few years as to how best we can build a permanent produce collection hub on the farm. Recently we've been in contact with an organisation that supports and facilitates the building of basic, low impact structures and it feels like they might be the perfect people to help us realise our visions. As yet we're only at the planning stages but it's looking more and more hopeful that 2012 could be the year we come together as a community and build our very own timber framed, straw bale insulated, turf roofed hub. A space that can accommodate the needs of the community as well as the fruit and veg we produce!

EDUCATION PROJECT – *by Ali Jeffery*

Our year of the education project which was generously funded by Rural East Community Forum has now come to an end, and having submitted the reports to the Community Forum, we're looking ahead to the year to come.

Future visits will be funded by an educational supplement which is part of the Organic Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, in place on the wider farm. The funding is paid according to the number of visits we host and should be enough to pay for a mixture of intensive school visits (with an activity based structure, much like the visits we hosted in 2011) and less labour intensive visits by groups of under 16s (school based or extra-curricular groups, such as scouts/guides). We have contacted all the primary schools in the local area, inviting them to get in touch if they would like to organise a free visit to Canalside between April and October, and already have interest for visits in the autumn term as well as the summer term. If you think your child's class/school might be interested in visiting, please pass on our website address, where there is lots of information for teachers about prospective visits as well as information about how to book a visit.

SOCIALS – by Caz Ingall

Happy New Year everyone!

I can't believe the time has come around already for another newsletter... how time flies. Tom, myself and the girls were out of the country over Christmas and New Year, and have come back feeling fully nourished and refreshed and ready for a new year. I hope 2012 brings you all what you're hoping for.

Recent socials



Who would have thought working could be so much fun?!

So... a look back at our last social... November saw our Winter gathering happening, with the remaining garlic being planted out plus a few other important jobs such as bedding the carrots in with straw etc

(although they've hardly needed the extra warmth in this winter we're having!). As always, many hands made light work, and the jobs got done quickly. The rest of the day saw a fantastic crew of folk cooking up a Thai curry storm, with Tom at the helm of the earth oven again, forking out

potato after hot jacket potato, followed by some truly delicious baked apples. Yum. With activities such as pumpkin carving, apple pressing and bird feed making going on, there was something for everyone to get involved in. Huge thank yous to everyone for all their help - getting too numerous to mention in person now but you all know who you are!

For me, it was actually one of the best socials we've ever had, and I think this came down to 2 reasons. Firstly the space - what with the geodome having moved to a more accessible space, and indeed the work that went into it to make it into a lovely light and usable place in which to prepare veg and so on, it just brought the whole thing together. The second reason is the people - I think with increasing accessibility to the space, it is much easier for folk to both find their way around and use the space, as well as taking more and more ownership over what happens here. The day flowed very smoothly, and it just seemed to me that people felt they could just get on with what needed doing, when it needed doing. To see this fine community of people starting to blend so fluidly with each other was truly heartwarming. Long may it continue!!

I'm not sure what 2012 will bring just yet, but I'm feeling really excited about all the potential. The continuing design and implementation of plans for the social area itself is entirely tied into how we will all use the space, which will eternally be an evolving and organic thing. Massive HOORAY to Abbie for being the leading energy in all this - tis truly inspiring. I've come up with some social dates for the year, but there's bound to be a lot more going on in between, not least the regular Sunday get togethers. Any ideas of what activities we could have going on here in 2012, in particular anything YOU'D like to offer, or any other ways in which you'd like to get involved, please get in touch. My email is cazingall@gmail.com or you can call me on 07787 435685.



The Winter music vibe!



Pumpkin carving for all ages!



Make way - more juicing supplies!

Winter blessings to y'all, and here's to many more fine times together in the coming year, Caz x

More recent socials – by Ali

On the last Saturday collection of the year I too had an opportunity (I think under slightly colder conditions than Caz at the Winter social) to experience the wonders of the geodome in its new form! Alongside a work morning washing the polytunnels ready for the new season's salads and the summer crops, a number of members and I served up mulled wine and spiced apple juice to go with locally made mince pies, all enjoyed round a roaring fire. Thank you to everyone who helped me with transportation of provisions, fire-making, kitchen duties and clearing up, and to everyone who came and shared a little seasonal cheer with us!



Making the tunnels gleam!



Warming up with a mug of hot apple juice

Dates for 2012 – get them in your diary! Details to be confirmed nearer the time.

Spring social and Big Spring work morning - Saturday 17th March

Summer social – Ceilidh - Saturday 7th July

Autumn social camping w/e and Big Autumn work morning - Friday 14th - Sunday 16th September

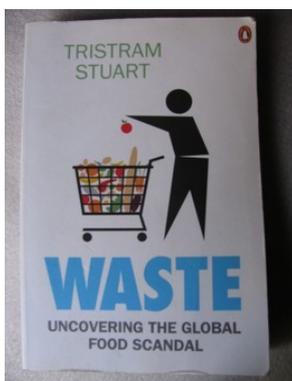
Winter social and Big Winter work morning - Saturday 17th November

WORK MORNINGS

Project work mornings still run every Wednesday and Saturday between 10am and 1pm. Your help is invaluable for completing big tasks that would just be too much for the growers! We also hope you gain some enjoyment, and a sense of well-being from spending time working with others outdoors. Any amount of time that you can spare is greatly appreciated – no need to tell us you're coming, just be there sometime after 10am with warm, old clothes and boots, and a snack and drink if you think you'll need them (and lunch if you'd like to stick around afterwards to eat!), and be ready to muck in with the task the growers have planned – they will tell you what to do, and provide any tools you need for the job. Look out for my weekly emails if you'd like to know in advance what the task will be!

And a new opportunity for this year – to develop the social area, Abbie (grower on the project) has started up *Social Sundays*. These offer opportunities to get involved with jobs to make our social area exactly how members would like it to be, or an opportunity to relax around the social area and drink tea, if that's what you'd prefer! The gates open at 11am and it is hoped it will be possible to have these sessions every week.

BOOK REVIEW Waste – Uncovering the Global Food Scandal, by Tristram Stuart



Many, if not all of us who are involved with Canalside, are concerned about the wastage of food that we see in our day-to-day lives – a few vegetables from our share which we don't quite manage to get through before they're past being used; the last of a crop at the project which is only fit for composting; vegetables from someone's uncollected share which no-one takes from the extras box. This book opens our eyes to the staggering levels of waste across the commercial food industry, reassuring us that, whilst we shouldn't be complacent about the food waste we generate within Canalside, it is actually very low, and we see it all. It is probably not a book to be recommended to those who are prone to feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of global problems! However, the shocking statistics are balanced with success stories, and an action plan with plenty of suggestions for how we can reduce our own food waste.

I found this to be a thoroughly readable book (it was my holiday reading last year!) where the statistics are engagingly presented within social observations of the food industry. If you'd like to read it, Ali has two copies available for members to borrow – please get in touch if you're interested. Not convinced you want to read it, but would like to reduce the food waste you are responsible for? Read on for tips about how to ensure your share of the harvest doesn't go to waste, and how to use the extras box more effectively!

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your veg share – helping you understand how things work

The growers harvest for Tuesday and Wednesday collections in the day on Tuesday, and for Saturday all day on Friday. Ali only works on the day before each harvest (Mondays and Thursdays), preparing the number of shares so that the growers know how many to harvest for. This is why we set noon Monday and Thursday as the deadline for changes to collection arrangements – after that time, Ali can't guarantee to see emails before your collection day as she is unlikely to check her Canalside work emails on the days when she is teaching.

If you are away or unable to collect your share, ideally you will be able to make arrangements for a friend or relative to collect on your behalf. However, if you can't and you know in advance before the deadline for changes that you need to collect on a different day, you can email Ali.

What to do if something unexpected has cropped up and you will miss/have missed your veg share collection slot: Call Ali as soon as possible – 07912 883422 – for her to see if the growers can bag up your share of the harvest for collection on another day.

Once you have been included in the harvest numbers, and harvested for that week, we are unfortunately unable to reharvest for you each time you miss your share as this would be to the detriment of the share for people collecting later in the week. We divide the harvested produce by the number of people who are collecting, so if anyone appears twice in the same week, they would be counted for two shares, thus making the share available for everyone else slightly smaller.

How to use the extras box

The extras box is for extra produce. Veg share members are encouraged to use the extras as follows:

- if you don't like or don't want something from your share, weigh out your share of it and put it in the extras (in a bag if it's leafy)
- if it's in the extras and you like it, please help yourself

Please be aware that if you leave unwanted veg from your share in the crates that are laid out for the collection slot, it will only be available to others in the extras three to four days after harvesting. By weighing it out when you collect your share, other veg members collecting on the same day can see what is spare – it's in the extras for them to have, and many appreciate the option of having a bit more of this or that!

The extras may also contain:

- veg which is available in quantities that are too small to give everyone a share
- veg that is not good enough quality for the share
- veg that is leftover after the previous collection slot

Whilst we make no guarantee of the quality or quantity in the extras, we hope veg share members will enjoy what is offered there.

What's in the share in the coming months?

You can expect between now and the end of April:

Potatoes, Carrots, Onions, Garlic, Leeks, Parsnip, Celeriac, Cabbage (January King), Squash, Beetroot, Mixed salad, Brussel sprouts, Swede, Kale, Cauliflower, Pak choi, Purple sprouting broccoli, Spinach, Radish, Chard

If you're beginning to run out of inspiration for what to do with winter roots, did you know you can order The Boxing Clever Cookbook through us? Copies are £10 each and contain a plethora of recipes for veg from all seasons, but with particular attention to those hardy winter roots – the book was developed by members of a CSA in Scotland where winter roots are a staple for much longer than in balmy Warwickshire! See the reference copy in the yurt or look at the display of sample pages on the board for more information. To order, please leave a message with £10 cash or cheque payable to Canalside Community Food in Ali's blue pigeon-hole in the yurt – she will email you to tell you when your copy is ready for collection from the brown members' pigeon-hole.

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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Permaculture Courses "Designing a Sustainable Future"

- Introduction Course - 11th & 12th February, 9am-5pm – full fee £120, low waged £100, unwaged £80
- Full Design Course – 10th & 11th March, 14th & 15th April, 12th & 13th May, 9th & 10th June, 7th & 8th July, 4th & 5th August, 9am-5pm – full fee £450, low waged £400, unwaged £350

Arranged by Transition Town Leamington, with Sarah Pugh (Transition Bristol) and Steven Jones teaching, held at East Lodge Sustainability Centre, Jephson Gardens, Leamington.

Contact Juliet Carter – 01926 421467 or juliet@buildingarts.co.uk

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WANTED: Beads, old/damaged jewellery, brooches and bone china

The items can be chipped, incomplete or broken. Please contact me on samelvyhart@gmail.com and I'll come and pick them up. Many thanks!

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In the Summer of 2014 I will be part of a World Challenge Team going to Northern India to take part in much-needed community work at a grassroots level. In addition to this, I'll have the opportunity to visit Rajasthan and trek across the Himalayas – but I need your help! In order to do this, I have to raise over three thousand pounds. If anyone – individuals or companies - would sponsor me, I would be extremely grateful. I'm going to document my time in India on a blog, and I assure you that this experience will not just be an idle adventure – we will be making a real difference in the lives of real people. Please get in touch if you can sponsor me, or help by passing this message on to potential sponsors, and if you would like to find out more about what I'll be doing before donating, don't hesitate to contact me on 01926 745097, or via email at amarboing@gmail.com.

Amardeep Singh Dhillon

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Ali's going for the chop for charity! I'm planning to have my long hair cut really short, to send to the Little Princess Trust which makes wigs for children who have lost their hair through cancer treatment. But I need a bit of encouragement to do it... Help me raise over £500 for Save the Children, who work on projects that benefit deprived children in the UK and across the world. Make your donation at: www.justgiving.com/ali-big-charity-chop and don't forget that if you're a UK tax payer, agreeing to gift aid your donation increases its value by nearly 20%. Fundraising total and photographic evidence will be in the next newsletter!



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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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ELECTRICAL SERVICES

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

Electrician & Handyman

Electrical and property maintenance
(ELECSEA registered)

ELECSEA

Painting and decorating

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

Graham Williams 01926 431129 email: grahamwilliams3@btinternet.com

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Please see over for more ads

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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

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Patrick James tutoring: a helping hand to success...

Friendly tutoring by experienced teacher:

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Free ½ hour consultation to assess your child's needs

Contact: 01926 335050 / 07749 876552 patrickjames@hotmail.com

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kd carpentry & maintenance

Call **Kev Northey** to discuss any small scale carpentry or maintenance jobs you have in mind. Any service available from hanging doors, to fitting flooring or tiling Kev can give you a free quotation.

For a locally (Radford Semele) based experienced tradesman who provides a professional service: Call: **07894 345843** or e-mail: kd.carpentry@yahoo.com

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Singing lessons whether you are experienced or totally unconfident, or just ready to take up something new, or want to try one or two sessions - I can help you find your voice, whatever your style. One-to-one or let me know if you'd like to join a new group. Text or ring **Clare Langstone, 07963 317697**

Clarinet, flute, piano, saxophone, recorder - experienced teacher, from school age onwards, beginner to more advanced. Exams, or just for enjoyment, I can help you to grow your confidence, nurture your talent. Text or ring **Clare Langstone, 07963 317697**

Therapeutic, relaxing massage - qualified, own comfortable room in Leamington, CV31 - ring for special introductory offer, or good idea for a present for a friend - Text or ring **Clare Langstone, 07963 317697**.

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