



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

Winter/spring 2010

newsletter no. 15

HELLO! Just where does the time go..? February already and I don't feel like I've stopped since the New Year! Well, it's certainly been a truer winter this season at least, reminding me much more of the cold months of when I was young. So much fun in the snow to be had – and now an even greater excuse having two small children to blame for snowball fights and sledging!

This time of year always instils in me a sense of reflection – a time to take stock of what is going on and how I might like things to go a little differently in the coming year. It is such that I am moving on from my role as General Administrator, handing over the reins to someone with new energy to imbue into the project. Indeed, we seem to have had a number of new arrivals over the last months, from workshares to babies and new growers alike.

Read on for Pete's News from the Field (including his first impressions of us all!), Dick's fruit project update and Bruce's 2010 social calendar. We have information on how you can get a discount on Action 21 membership or become a part of a newly proposed 'meat ordering group'. And then there's the new Members' Corner, a space where you can promote your exciting ideas to your fellow members. And last, but by no means least, we have Sarah's seasonal recipes to give us all inspiration of what to do with all that tasty veg that fills up our homes each week. Enjoy the news, and enjoy the food... Love and blessings, Caz x



We need new veg members!!

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

We're currently on 105 members and our ideal number is 115, so PLEASE help us get those last 10 members we need and help make this year a really successful one. Thank you!

PETE's News from the field

Since the autumn newsletter, we've seen the shift from bountiful tomatoes, peppers, broccoli and cauliflowers to our 'coated in topsoil' range of root veg: celeriac, parsnips, swede, and the other winter staples.

The main story has been the weather, with an exceptionally mild November followed



by hard frosts and daytime temperatures staying below freezing in the week before Christmas. Many of you commented on the 'cold hands' problem collecting the bumper-but-half-frozen Christmas share, and the first week back in January was even colder!

Volunteers and workshares have been invaluable - fantastic when we cleaned the polytunnels, uncomplaining as we forked out sticky carrots with cold, wet hands, and valiantly folding our 50 metre crop covers despite the wind and rain. Thanks also to those who turned up for the clearing of the tomato plants, and of course the planting and mulching of the fruit trees, which, while I think of it ,



is an on going project and any offer of help and or large sheets of cardboard would be very welcome.

My first impressions were requested by the boss, so here they are:

- Working with Stew, Tom, Charlie and Caz has been and is a real pleasure, and I've also felt a great deal of support from the steering group, workshares and members- Kath and Dan deserve a special mention for their hospitality.
- There's more of a Couch grass (*Elytrigia repens*) problem than I had realised, this is an indicator of compaction and or waterlogging and will need careful attention.
- Canalside, in my opinion, needs ongoing effort from all involved - the AGM highlighted the successes of 2009, and I hope that the momentum is carried into the coming season.
- Finally, a personal tribute to Stew and Hannah, for their efforts to welcome me, even as they were busy moving on. Stew especially worked hard to leave me knowing as much as possible about the job and the community, and offered a wonderful example for the short period that we worked together.

For me the real value of the Canalside project is the access it gives us all to useable land. This is a unique pleasure, and one I feel we have to work hard to deserve. So in that spirit I am looking forward to getting my hands dirty alongside you all this coming year, and would like to end by echoing Tom's words at the AGM: We are absolutely open to all who have ideas, energy or time to give to the project, and in fact, we are entirely dependent upon you all!



New arrivals...



Charlie Swallow moved from the workshare team to be a part of the fully fledged Canalside growing team after Stew's departure at the end of November. Here's some words from the lovely lady herself to describe how she's settled into her new job: *'I am now a month or so into my role as grower and honestly feel so lucky to be in the position I am, having the opportunity to learn more about how CSA works and gaining confidence as a vegetable producer. Canalside has become such an important part of my life over the past year or so and it's great to feel even more involved in decisions and the day to day running, sharing the highs and the lows of growing food for our community. It has been an eye opening experience, realising just how much energy is involved in keeping things going. When I'm not working on the farm I am looking after an allotment project in Coventry. The project exists to support people who care for family members or friends with disabilities. This is another new role for me and I am working on finding my feet. I'm planning project days for the coming year to try and inspire people to grow vegetables and use gardening as a way to empower themselves, to relieve their stresses and discover their creativity. I really look forward to getting to know more of the Canalside members over time.'*

A welcome back to the country after her 6 ½ month stint travelling the world, welcome back to the project, but most importantly a HUGE welcome to Ali Jefferey who is to take over as General Administrator when I leave in couple of weeks' time. Many of you will already know Ali from her involvement in Canalside as a workshare volunteer, but now *all* of you will get the chance to get to know her as she takes my place. The role involves quite a complex network of different responsibilities, so please be patient with Ali as she finds her feet! I'm sure Ali will introduce herself properly when she starts, so more from her at a later date...



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We've had a new workshare volunteer join the team in the past few months, so here's a little bit about all these lovely folk:

Simon Gregory joined the workshare team back in October. Simon is an advertising copywriter and lives in Leamington with his wife and three kids. In his own words, 'our back-garden chickens eat all our home grown fruit and veg, so my workshare at Canalside keeps my family from starvation.'



Last, but by no means least, an extra special warm welcome to the world to Bruce & Rebecca's beautiful baby girl, born in November. In the proud daddy's words: "Rose Dulcie (Rosie) Knight was born on the evening of 23rd November. It was a beautiful, relaxed home water birth, Rebecca was just amazing, and the midwife happened to be a friend of ours. Rosie weighed in at 7lb 11oz. We're all doing very well, thank you. She seems very settled and Jamie (big brother) loves her to bits." We'd all like to wish Bruce, Rebecca, Jamie and Rosie many warm blessings and long nights of restful sleep and look forward to watching Rosie grow fat on the many sumptuous gifts of the land here!



...AND Departures

As all of you should know by now, I recently handed in my notice as General Administrator. The reasons for this decision are numerous, but essentially the crux of it is that I just don't feel I can give as much time to the role as is now demanded of me. Tallis & Kere (our 2 young girls) have had to deal with my distracted attention for long enough and I'd like to now devote more of my energy and head space to them, as well as other interests such as deepening my knowledge of herbal medicine and to also put some more focus onto the other farm projects Tom and I are involved in (that have very much been sidelined these last few years!) It's been a truly amazing time in this role and I wouldn't change it for the world.

Watching Canalside grow from a very tiny seed in the minds of some amazing local people to the ever expanding flower that it continues to be has been a truly fantastic experience.

I will remain involved in Canalside in all the other ways I do already outside of my admin role, so I hope to stay closely in touch with as many of you lovely folk as possible! I'd like to say a massive thank you to all of you for your incredible commitment and support to Canalside and for all your patience and understanding throughout our first steps.

I'm sure that Ali will truly outshine me as my successor and I only hope she enjoys the fun and responsibility (in equal measure!) as much as I have. Farewell lovely folk, Caz x



fruit field – by Dick

The fruit project is now well on its way. Early in December we were lucky with a fine Sunday and lots of volunteers, who planted a total of 114 trees in the new orchard. These included:

- 61 APPLES (Mostly late Autumn, keeping varieties, plus a few early apples and 8 cookers)
- 27 PLUMS (Mainly dessert plums, with some cookers and damsons)
- 14 PEARS (Dessert pears, plus 3 very late keeping, cookers)
- 12 CHERRIES (Eight dessert, 4 Morello cooking cherries). 8 more dessert cherries to come later

To complete the plan, there are 23 spaces left for various extra trees to add to the diversity. These will probably include Medlar, Quince, Black Mulberry, Bay tree, Lime, etc. Many thanks to all of you who have sponsored trees and who helped with the busy day of planting.

Now we are looking forward, beyond snowy, freezing January, to the next stage. The orders are already confirmed of a big range of soft fruit and we are planning another massive planting weekend on **Saturday 27th/Sunday 28th February** to get this all in. This will include Raspberries, Blackberries, Gooseberries, Red, White & Black Currants, and Rhubarb.



The orchard field is "Upper Slade", reached via the track opposite the yurt, running SE uphill through "Big Gorse" field. Anyone visiting the orchard recently will have seen thick layers of mulch (green waste compost over thin plastic sheeting) - this is in readiness for planting rows of soft fruit, down the

centre of each avenue between the newly planted trees. Stand by for more big calls for planting volunteers!

The total plan for soft fruit involves a lot of work and considerable expense. So it has been divided into two stages of planting: roughly half this Winter and the rest next Winter. At risk of being boring and repetitive, establishing a fruit orchard is a considerably longer term project than the annual cycle of vegetable growing - so we ask you to be patient! But there are great potential rewards. The soft fruit will give us our first returns in 2011 - mainly with some rhubarb, raspberries and blackberries. Over the next two or three years, crops from the other soft fruit bushes will build up and the top fruit trees will come into production.

Sponsor a tree!

Over the fortuitous timing of Christmas, we managed to raise sponsorship for 123 top fruit trees. This was an amazing total, which we're truly delighted in, so another huge thank you to everyone that contributed to this.

However... this does still leave another 50 trees to sponsor to complete the top layer of our fruit garden. So... if you would also like to contribute to this new project, why not sponsor a tree yourself?! It really couldn't be easier. The cost of one tree is **£15** and you can sponsor as many as you like! Just send your money and request to Ali and she will send you a Tree Gift Certificate in return.

general information

Extra potatoes for sale! Due to our pretty spectacular potato harvest this year, we would like to offer Canalside members (veg and non-veg alike) the opportunity of purchasing 25kg sacks from us for £10. Please note, you will still be receiving your usual potatoes in your weekly veg share, but this is just in addition to those. We know just how much some of you like your tatties so here's your chance to have your very own sack full to delve into at your heart's desire! It is also an opportunity for non-veg members to buy some excess produce too. Contact me/Ali to place your order!

Action21 Membership

A21 and Canalside recently formulated an agreement to offer each other's members a discount on membership. As such, members of Canalside Community Food are now able to receive a 20% discount off any type of Action 21 membership, upon request and each time they renew membership. Membership of Action 21 includes:

- Quarterly newsletter with information about local environmental initiatives
- Information and advice about sustainability in Warwickshire
- Partnerships and deals with local and national organisations
- Opportunities to attend seminars and talks on climate change, local sustainable development and energy efficiency
- The chance to vote at their AGM
- Most importantly - support A21 practical projects towards local sustainability

In exchange, Members of Action 21 will receive a 20% discount off their first year's non-veg membership with Canalside.

So... if you're interested in learning more about Action 21 and what they do locally to promote sustainability, check out their website at www.action21.co.uk and get in touch with them if you're interested in signing up as a member.

Meat ordering group

Do you eat meat? Would you like to have easier access to locally produced, organic meat? If so, then maybe this idea is for you...

As you all know, we have close links with Fabienne & Simon Peckham at Galileo farm who provide us with all our eggs. We have also tried working out ways in which our members to take delivery of their meat products when they come to collect their Canalside veg, but for one reason or another, this just hasn't worked out.

So... Judy (Steele) has come up with the idea of having a meat ordering group, whereby each month a list of what is available is sent to whoever is interested in being on a 'meat mailing list' – members could then let Judy know what they wanted to order and she would then place that order with Fabienne. Depending on the arrangement, Judy has said she could then collect the meat from the farm and bring it back to her house in Radford Semele, from where members could then come to collect their individual orders.

FYI – this is not something you would have to buy into each month – if you just wanted to dip in and out when you wanted, that is absolutely fine.

If this is something you would be interested in this, please get in touch with me/Ali a.s.a.p.

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

Another year and 8 more Canalside Socials to plan. I'm glad to be on board for another year but will be stepping down as "social sec" in a year's time - so if anyone out there wants the job, don't hide your light under a bushel!

Traditionally, Canalside socials take place on the major turning points in the pre-Christian Celtic Calendar, many of which have been adopted by the church calendar. We tend to choose the nearest weekend for convenience. So here's the provisional dates for this year, mostly not matching with the actual festival dates:



Saturday 20th March

Saturday 1st May

Monday 28th June

Saturday 1st August

Saturday 18th September

Saturday 2nd October

Saturday 18th December

Spring Equinox

Beltane/Mayday

Summer Solstice and Folk on The Water event

Lammas/Harvest Festival

Autumn Equinox (Michaelmas & CEILIDH night!)

Samhain/Halloween

Winter Solstice (Christmas)

The keen-eyed amongst you will spot the Summer Solstice Social takes place on a **MONDAY 28th June**. This is to tie in with an interesting canal-based music project called "Folk on the Water" (more on this in a later newsletter). Also, following the very successful event last year, we have decided to repeat the spectacular Canalside Community Ceilidh on **Saturday 18th September**. The 2009 fundraising Ceilidh was a sell out, so get this date in your diary now!

On the subject of fundraising, we are planning to have an "Auction of Promises" at Radford Village Hall and are hoping to hold this some time in May. Local and much-loved wholefood shop Gaia held a promise auction last year, and it was a storming success. The concept: Canalside members offer promises, services, or anything else they can think of, and we all gather in the hall and bid for the prizes, raising money for the Canalside fruit project in the process. The promises could be pretty much ANYTHING, but here's a few ideas: if you own a holiday cottage, you could offer a week's stay; if you are a therapist you could offer massage, acupuncture, a hippie rainbow-crystal love bath, or a foot-rub. You could offer to cook someone a 3-course meal, babysit, mow their lawn..... anyway the more I say may limit your imagination. Anything goes, as far as I see it!

Hope to see you soon, Bruce

If you are interested in offering your time and skills to any of our social events, please get in touch with Bruce (bruceknight.voice@virgin.net or 01926 778454)

Members' corner!

Do you have any interesting projects you'd like to promote to your fellow Canalsider's..? If so, then this is the space for you! (Please note – this is not a small ads section, although for a small fee it may be something to consider in the future...?)

Learn how to make wine with the Leamington Wine Makers Circle!

Ever wondered how wine was made? Stuck with a glut of damsons, blackberries or even parsnips? Wondering how you can turn these into something else besides another jam, chutney or soup? The Leamington Wine Maker's Circle might just have the answer for you! In existence for over 40 years the members are always glad to help those who want to start out or develop their wine making skills. This simple and easy hobby celebrates seasonality with results that you'll be able to enjoy for years to come. The Circle meets at 8pm on the third Thursday of every month in the Lillington Social Club. Want to find out more? Contact Graham on gap736uk@yahoo.co.uk or 07747 036785 or come along to any of the meetings.



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