



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

WINTER 2010 -11

newsletter no. 18

HELLO EVERYONE AND HELLO 2011! Welcome to another



Early snow in late November

newsletter packed with news of the project and all its activities. Already the severe cold and snow of December seems like a distant memory, and we have at least recovered from the extra work that entailed. Read about how the veg in the fields and store fared in the extreme weather conditions in **News from the Field** from Will. Also in this issue you will find: an update on the **Fruit Project** from Gareth; news about **Site Changes** from Tom and a report about the new **Education Project** from me, as well as news about recent social

and work events on the project. There are details of a new format for sharing **Recipes** with you, as well as snippets of useful information about the project. In **New arrivals...And departures** we have a few welcomes to give, and an unprecedented number of people to say goodbye to as several workshares move onto new things or take a break from their volunteering, and one of our growing team prepares to leave. As always, we have **Members' Corner**, a space where you can promote your exciting ideas to your fellow members, and again in this edition is the **Small Ads** section for members to promote their business ventures. Read on and enjoy as the days slowly lengthen and winter eases its grip! Ali

NEWS FROM THE FIELD - by Will Johnson

The weather during the last three months has gone from one extreme to another. At the beginning of October the temperatures on some days were getting close to 20°C, we were picking French beans and courgettes for the share; it was still summer. At the beginning of December we felt the first of two unseasonably harsh cold snaps, temperatures just before Christmas getting as low as -15°C. The stored crops (and the storage methods) were truly tested and a few potatoes and squash didn't make it, but on the whole the stores rode the storm. The farm was practically inaccessible for the last pick up of the year, but thanks to a team of people and a long, long Monday on the 20th we got all the veg off the farm and to a selection of pick up points (provided by a few diehard members) around Leamington and Warwick.

A lot of veg in the Christmas share came straight from the stores. The barn has slowly transformed into a straw bale storeroom over the autumn months. In September the garlic and onions went in (lots of garlic, too few onions unfortunately). In October a good 8 tonnes of potatoes (that's equivalent to 320 x 25kg sacks) went into their store. Also in October we put a bumper harvest of squash into a specially made storeroom (again, straw bales were our building bricks). This store has a gas heater inside as squash store best at about 15°C, however we're happy to aim to keep the room above freezing and not much more, and we've barely managed even that during the very coldest nights of December. A few productive work mornings in November enabled us to clamp about 500kg of celeriac and just less than 800kg of beetroot. The harsh weather later on made us very glad that we'd managed it, as soon after the remaining celeriac outside were frozen to the core. As well as protecting the crops by having them in store, it also saves people from going out into the muddy fields more than is necessary!



The straw bale squash store

Some timely drillings of salad crops in the tunnels during the early autumn has meant we should be able to provide mixed salad leaves most weeks of the new year. One salad mix in November contained 19 different varieties of leaves!

The end of one year and the beginning of another sees a quieter time on the farm; when we're not harvesting produce we have time to fix and tidy all the things that were not a priority at the busier times of last season. Work mornings of late have often provided a chance to pack away irrigation pipe and other equipment, getting the plots freed up for the tractor.

The quiet period and end of 2010 year also give the opportunity to review 2010's successes and shortcomings, get feedback from members and put together a plan for the forthcoming season. The addition of a large polytunnel (recently bought on good old ebay) will effectively mean we have another 2 tunnels to grow in and early thoughts are that we'll grow more salad in the winter, more solanaceae crops (peppers, aubergines, tomatoes) during the summer and we should have the luxury of being able to rest one tunnel space per year to allow it to recover and build fertility.

Late news just in

Since writing this, the true toll of the December frosts has revealed itself. In the thaw of the last week or so we have found that hundreds of cabbages are rotten (almost the entire crop), all the beetroot and celeriac still outside have been badly damaged (good job we stored a decent amount) and the stored squash are in a worse state than we originally thought. All we can do now is learn from what has happened and try to salvage what we can. Fortunately we have lots of carrots, parsnips, potatoes, leeks, swede, onions and garlic that have not been badly affected, not to mention lots of salad in the tunnels that is back to its growing ways.

Will

This is one of the harsh realities of farming – that sometimes the weather and other uncontrollable factors affect the size of a crop or the ability to store it. And this is where you are all so important. By choosing to get your veg from the only local CSA, you are sharing the risk of farming with us. We value and appreciate your support so much, and no more so than at times of challenge. We hope that you won't notice an adverse impact on the size of the shares over the coming weeks, and are optimistic that the other brassica crops (such as kale and purple sprouting broccoli) which would normally come in during the next few weeks and months are steadily preparing themselves for harvesting. Already we're enjoying some fantastic salads again now that they have thawed out and sprung back to life. We can expect that to continue fairly consistently as the days lengthen and warm up. We thank you for your understanding and support. Please continue to inform us if the vegetables in your share are too frost damaged to use, although we can assure you that the growers will be doing everything they can to ensure that you still receive good quality veg, with as much variety in your share as possible.

Ali

WORK MORNINGS

Please remember we hold 2 work mornings every week. These are on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**, from **10am – 1pm**. Although the growing side of the project is quiet at this time of year, there are maintenance tasks to be done ready for the busy growing season. And before the next newsletter, we will be finishing off the harvests of any remaining crops as well as heading into the busy planting out season when any help will be much appreciated.

Please look out for my weekly emails which give a little information about the tasks which are to be tackled that week. However, if for any reason you don't get one, 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 and use them for matched funding if we need to!

FRUIT FIELD - by Gareth Davies

The orchard is looking good although the fruit trees have bedded down for the winter after the severe freezing weather. The top fruit trees (apples, pears, plums and cherries) seem to have established well and we are already looking forward to vigorous growth in the new season. We have also put up some support wires for the raspberries, blackberries and other soft fruits which we have already planted. However the cold weather has meant that we weren't able to plant all the soft fruit before Christmas as planned so we are aiming to plant it in the next couple of weeks. Keep an eye on your emails and come up and give us a hand to plant it when it is delivered. And please walk up and have a look at the orchard when you pick up your veg!

As announced at the AGM we are also aiming to start our fruit share this year using fruit from members' gardens to supplement the soft fruit that we will start to harvest. The idea is that we will collect surplus fruit from your gardens (or any of your neighbours gardens!) and use this to make up a fruit share for perhaps 4 months from August. In return we will offer to look at your trees and help to prune them back into shape if you want us to. We are currently aiming to offer a fruit share for £5 a week.

If you would like to offer a tree or trees in your garden please get in touch with Gareth (g_davies@talk21.com) but we will also shortly contact those who signed the list last year to see if they still want to take part.

The fruit project is generously funded by the Lottery Local Food Programme (and your tree sponsorship!).

NEW ARRIVALS...

In September we welcomed Will Johnson to the project as our new full-time grower. Here's what he has to say so far about working at Canalside:

"Life at Canalside so far has been great. This is the fifth vegetable farm I have worked on over the last 6 years (yes, I'm a bit of a wanderer - a reliable and punctual one though as my referees will testify...) and the thing that stands out for me about the approach to vegetable growing here is the attention to record keeping and discussion; this strikes me as a farm that learns from its successes and failures each year. I'm very glad to have got the job and am excited about putting a lot of hard work into the project and learning a lot (and hopefully not just about vegetable growing).



"Highlight so far: Harvesting salad leaves that I drilled the week after I arrived and managing to make a mix of 19 (nineteen) different species.

"Low point: Checking the cabbage patch today (11th January) and finding that most of them have been zapped by the frost."

Our youngest member arrived on 5th December, born to long-standing members Sarah and Steven Hunt in their home, and weighing in at 8lb 6oz. We welcome Finlay Asher to the Canalside community as well as the Big Wide World! May your life be filled with health and happiness. We look forward to meeting you and seeing you flourish in the years to come! Sarah and Steven thank everyone for their good wishes and expressed their appreciation for being part of such an amazing community of people!

AND DEPARTURES

In the past quarter we've said goodbye to a number of our stalwart workshares, who are moving on for a variety of reasons.

First to leave was Helen Tudge who had been volunteering on the farm for nearly a year and a half. She joined us in May 2009 and her regularity and stamina were much appreciated in the field. We missed out on her company through a chunk of the summer as she bided her time for a fracture to heal. Once it was close to healing in September, she decided she needed to dedicate time to her professional life after the fracture got in the way of that, so for the time being has put her wellies into hibernation.

We also say goodbye to **Sam Elyhart**, who has recently got a new job working as a teaching assistant in Leamington. Whereas previously her working week had enough flexibility to allow her to come to volunteer in the week, sadly her work in school does not permit this. Her energy and enthusiasm defined her time as a workshare from October 2009.

Amy Footer is also moving on to pastures new and will be missed by her many friends at Canalside:

"After almost two years as a workshare at Canalside I'm sadly hanging up my wellies and heading to London for a new job with a recycling company Terracycle. I'd like to thank all the growers I've worked with: Tom, Stew, Danny, Pete, Charlie (my lovely housemate!) and most recently Will - who's brought new energy to the farm and became popular by introducing very welcome tea breaks! I've also really enjoyed working alongside other workshares and regular volunteers including Roger, Dave, Graham, Sam, Jane, Nicky and many, many others.

"I'll be eternally grateful to Canalside for helping me to settle into Leamington, make new friends and of course learn so much about growing vegetables! Surprisingly I've even enjoyed working during the winter seasons, keeping a stiff and slightly muddy upper lip! I'm also really grateful for having the chance to work with Ali on the education project last year; a brilliant project that I hope will continue to be successful in the years to come!

"So all in all I'm very sad to be saying goodbye to you all, but it's definitely not a complete goodbye as I'm sure I'll be popping up for the occasional social (I've got my eye on the May Queen crown!)"

And last, but by no means least, Charlie Swallow, our part-time grower, is moving on to a full-time job in early March. She will be working in a private garden near Bicester which has the potential for creating a forest garden – something she is very interested in, and a factor which was a draw for her. However, this didn't make her decision to leave Canalside much easier, because Canalside means so much to her.



Charlie joined Canalside as a workshare volunteer in November 2008 whilst looking for part-time work in growing and horticulture. Although she found other work, she stepped into the grower's shoes, or should I say wellies, when Danny Brook-Steele left the growing team in the summer of 2009. She covered for Danny through the end of the summer before Pete Corbett could start as full-time grower, and then finally moved properly from workshare to grower on the project in November 2009. We will really miss her enthusiasm and passion for the project and for local, organic food, and her friendship, and I'm sure you will join us in wishing her all the best in her new job. As she won't be far away she hopes to return to join in with socials and the odd work morning, so I'm pretty confident we haven't seen the last of her!

SITE DEVELOPMENTS - by Tom

We've been enjoying the newly developed storage space on site over the last couple of months. It's been wonderful having the new farm barn so close to the yurt to fetch winter stored crops out from as and when we need them. Since the last newsletter the farm has also completed a lean-to section on the back of the main barn for Canalside to use when the main barn is needed for farm cereal crop storage.



The newly re-roofed yurt

Before the winter really kicked in we took the decision to re-roof the yurt. This was due to be the sixth consecutive winter that the yurt canvas would have been called upon to keep us and the veg dry! So the new fixed and solid roof was put on to extend the life of our veg collection hub for as long as it's needed. Many thanks to Nick Holmes for his help over the two days that it took to complete the work.

We've now re-defined the space set aside for socialising in with a newly planted hedge. This was put in with the help of members during a Saturday work morning in mid January. It's the first of a number of steps we're hoping to take this year to improve the area for members when you come down to the farm. Look out for emails calling on folk to help with more planting, next time it'll be willow hedges around an area we'd like to develop as a children's play space.

A large additional poly tunnel has recently been acquired and we'll focus on getting that up on site over the next couple of months. This will border the far edge of the social area and allow us to work out where to position our remaining structures more permanently. Although we do now have two compost toilets in our new shed, we still do have the long-term aim of building a more permanent composting toilet on site that would operate without the use of buckets! We'd also like to erect a simple pole barn to complement the geodome and become our field kitchen space complete with earth oven and facilities for members to come together during the year to cook and eat the food that's been grown on the project.

As always all of these ideas will need the energy and involvement of as many of you guys as possible to make them a reality. So if you've got suggestions or would like to be more closely involved then please do get in touch. Otherwise keep an eye out for emails letting you know what activities are coming up and when you can get stuck in.

SCHOOLS PROJECT - by Ali

After months of planning, October saw lots of activity on the Education project, running in partnership with Action 21. Following material making, led by Ali Smith in her 'Fab fabs' sessions during September, the year 1 class from Radford Semele Primary School came to Canalside on October 7th for a morning of getting up-close and personal with a range of vegetables! The morning started with a matching activity in the geodome where children had to find the others who had a representation of their vegetable, including the fantastic



Vegetable matching game



Harvesting broccoli

drawings and papier maché models made by all the volunteers in September. Meanwhile, a team of volunteers were busy preparing vegetables for an end of morning snack. By the time the first activity was finished, the early morning mist had cleared and the dew was fast disappearing, leaving a perfect autumnal day for walking round the fields to discover where different vegetables grow. The children had great fun taking turns to help harvest

an example of each type of vegetable – both from the fields and in the polytunnels. We rounded the morning off with a snack to taste all the different vegetables they'd had experience of, and a vegetable themed story. The super-sweet sweetcorn proved to be unsurprisingly popular, with most children also willing to try vegetable crudité's of beetroot, calabrese broccoli, Romanesco broccoli and cauliflower as well as vegetables that are more well-known for being eaten raw!

Sincere thanks to Ali Smith and everyone who helped her to make models and drawings, to the volunteers who came up to help me prepare the site the day before the workshop, and to the volunteers who helped out with preparing vegetables, guiding children round the fields and generally supporting me in delivering the workshop. I'm looking forward to the next steps in this project, and giving access to children from other local schools.

Just after the schools' workshop, our application for grant funding from the Rural East Community Forum was considered. We were fortunate to be awarded the full amount of the grant we had asked for, which will be used to develop the education project further, extending it to visits from two schools – the two classes who visit in May will return in the autumn to follow up on their experiences. As this work is funded by the Rural East Community Forum we will be focussing on schools in the Rural East area (in which the farm and Radford Semele are located), with a view to opening up opportunities to other local schools as the project expands further.

SOCIALS

The social calendar for Canalside is currently receiving a facelift, because we are keen to tie the socials in more closely with the big tasks of the year and also with the food grown on the project. Please look out for an email in the near future which will outline the new format and details of when socials will take place this year.

Recent Socials

The social on Saturday 18th December started with an attempt to plant the trees for the edible hedge at the edge of the social area, but when the snow set in, in a very determined manner, this was abandoned for a more clement day, with the trees being heeled into the soil in one of the polytunnels until then. (This was completed recently in much pleasanter conditions – both for the trees and the volunteers and growers!) A group of hardy souls stayed around the fire to enjoy hot mulled wine and mince pies in the snow. The children enjoyed sledging down the slope, although they found being tipped out into the snow on a fast corner to be less fun! The grown-ups had their own fun with a snowball fight whilst the children chatted almost oblivious to the chaos that was taking place around them! We hope you also enjoyed the snow in some way, whether through a snowy walk, fun and frolics or simply enjoying the view from your window.

Before that, the social at the end of October gave an opportunity for members of all ages to release their creativity and carve a pumpkin. We received a group of CSA farmers from Japan, who caught the end of Kristoff the clown's show before looking round the project on a guided walk with members and growers. They then thoroughly enjoyed their experience of being hosted overnight in members' homes, before travelling on to Loughborough the next day.



Kristoff the clown's show



Pumpkin creations



If you are interested in offering your time and skills to any of our social events, please get in touch with Caz (cazingall@gmail.com)

Don't forget, this can count towards your annual voluntary contribution to the project, and indeed socials can only happen with help from you, the members.

GENERAL INFORMATION - by Ali

Getting in touch with us

My working hours have recently changed slightly. I now work regularly on Mondays and Thursdays, for most of each day. If you email me in between those days, please note – I am unlikely to respond before my next working day. For this reason I have an auto-responder set up asking you to **call me if you have an urgent issue – including your veg collection day changes after the deadlines** of Mon 12noon (for Tues and Weds) and Thurs 12noon (for Sat).

Up-and-coming veg with a request for recipes

After many hours of dedicated voluntary work, mainly on the part of Caz, trawling recipe books and typing up seasonal recipes to compile the recipe sheet for each newsletter, we have decided to change how we support you in finding interesting things to do with your veg.

Firstly I am going to point you in the direction of some brilliant online resources that have a fantastic range of recipes that you can search within.

www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/recipes <http://allrecipes.co.uk/>
<http://www.vegbox-recipes.co.uk/>

Vegbox-recipes also has a regular newsletter which you can subscribe to from the page on this link – it includes seasonal recipes as well as articles of interest to vegbox recipients.

I would also like to invite you to send in your favourite recipes using up-and-coming veggies to forward to other members. The growers have given me a list of all the veg we can expect to receive over the next 3 months: **potatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, brussel sprouts, swede, parsnips, beetroot, leeks, salad, squash, celeriac, kale**

If you have a delicious or interesting recipe which uses any of these, please send it to me by email (as a website link would be fine, or in the email). I'll send out any recipes I receive on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

For most people, identifying the vegetables that are in your share should be fairly straightforward by checking on the blackboard as you weigh out your share. However, if you don't have such an opportunity, please feel free to call and ask me what it is you've got. I'm more than happy to take a quick call about the contents of your share if it means that you have a better idea of how to use it straightaway and as well as in the future.

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 Canalsider's..? If so, then this is the space for you!

★★★★★

Over the next year, I am planning to spend Thursdays being 'creative' and would like to invite anyone interested to join me. Over the years I have tried my hand at all sorts of crafts, such as patchwork, spinning, feltmaking, papermaking, knitting, basketry, collage....and now I think its time to start to use up my stores of 'it'll-come-in-useful-one-day' materials. I think I might start by making a stash of greetings cards, then I won't have to stop other things when an occasion comes along. So, I'll be starting on the 3rd February, at 10am at Leasowe Farm. Come along with your ideas, projects, materials and share the experience.

Give me a ring on 01926 421935 if you want more info. Jane Ingall

★★★★★

Ryton Pools Country Park Creepy Crawly Club*

A fun 2 hr session of environmental games and activities investigating and exploring what's in and around Ryton Pools Country Park.

- For children aged 4 to 11 (ish) - £1 per child. (Under 8s to be accompanied by an adult.)
- 2nd Saturday of each month at Ryton Pools Country Park Visitor Centre at 10am-12 noon.
- Contact Pam Reason (Creepy Crawly Club leader) or a Site Ranger at the Park on 02476 305592 for more details. There will be a list of events for each session in the yurt.

*affiliated to Wildlife Watch, which is the junior branch of the Wildlife Trusts

★★★★★



Sat 29th + Sun 30th Jan
Introduction to Permaculture
"Designing a Sustainable Future"

Go to www.canalsidecommunityfood.blogspot.com for full details of the course.

Contact Juliet Carter on 01926 421467 to book a place.

SMALL ADS

Do you have any business ventures you'd like to advertise to other members of Canalside? Then *this* is the space for you!

... o o o ...

The Natural Fish Pedicure-Sucky Fish now available at Spring Clinic , 4 Regent Street, Leamington Spa

"Walk-in service - No Appointments" - OPEN EVERYDAY

These clever little tropical fish have been recognised for their numerous healing benefits and effectiveness in exfoliating, cleansing and softening of the skin by bathers for centuries. Let them work their magic for you and your skin...Excellent for hard dry skin, psoriasis, eczema and for fun!!! Prices start from £6

More Information on www.suckyfish.co.uk

... o o o ...

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.

... o o o ...



Leamington Pilates at The Old Library offers classes for beginners and improvers as well as post-natal classes "just mums" and "mums and babies". 1:1 and 1:2 lessons are available at Creative Health Centre.

Please contact Linda for more info 07915 855420 www.leamingtonpilates.co.uk

... o o o ...

Herbal hair and skin care products made in Leamington Spa!

Made in Leamington Spa, Amiya Natural Beauty products are inspired by the use of herbs and are:

- Gentle yet effective
- Made with quality ingredients, including many organically sourced
- Handmade with love and care
- Free from parabens and SLS
- No synthetic colours or fragrances
- Not tested on animals
- Safety certified

Our range includes: shampoos, conditioner, face creams & toner, hand lotion & wash, salves, and massage oils.

You can see our full range on our website www.amiyabeauty.co.uk

Amiya's owner, Elizabeth also writes about herbal treatments and remedies you can make at home on her blog: <http://apotheblogary.blogspot.com>

Email or call Elizabeth on admin@amiyabeauty.co.uk or 07815 107231. Online ordering is available, local pick up/ delivery can also be arranged to save on P&P costs (please contact me before placing an order for local orders).



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