



Dunkeld and Birnam Community Growing SC 042496

Dunkeld & Birnam Community Growing^{SCIO}

NEWSLETTER February 2016 SC 042496

Happy New Year! You may be thinking it's a bit late for that but at The Field, it is the start of the new year's preparations. The manure has been spread and we are getting ready to sow thousands of leek seeds in boxes of compost in the polytunnel (which Raymond has been keeping free from the snow as much as possible).

Come March the tractor will be hard at work and the Field will be ploughed before being raked level all ready for the onion sets to be put in in April. Watch out for posters announcing the tattie planting days. Usually the middle weekend in April just before the school goes back!

Seeing the back of what has been a challenging winter for the area (which followed a challenging summer and confusing Autumn!), brings great hope and we can look forward to all that the busy spring season brings



Did you know...

The Field isn't just about growing fabulous organic food, in fact there is a whole lot more which perhaps you hadn't realised. First of all, we have charitable status and one of our charitable objectives is *"to promote education within in the community in organic food growing, care and harvest and distribution and ensure a better understanding of the connections between what we eat and how it is produced, delivered and prepared."* Last year, In a continuing effort to meet this objective we had visits from the Wildsparks outdoor play scheme who had loads of fun in and around the Field, and 50 Primary children planted out 200 leeks, 30 courgette plants and 3 rows of beans! And it's not just the children who are learning, everyone who comes up to the Field either as a volunteer or as a visitor has the opportunity to learn something new, keeping alive the connection between what we harvest and sell at the stalls and how and where it grows.



The climate change event 'Live Earth Birnam', held in Birnam Arts and organised by our member Jess Pepper, was a great opportunity for us to talk about our role in the community and to explain what part we can play in helping to tackle climate change. Sally took responsibility for our display and stall and it was admired by many of the participants.

That phrase "taking responsibility" might well echo what we are trying to achieve at the field. We want to reduce our reliance on food flown half way round the world sending more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere; we don't need to reject unconventionally sized vegetables, creating food waste mountains or get involved in competitive pricing to please shareholders.

We want the links between field and fork to be as simple and direct as possible.



Volunteer Spotlight – Claire Ash

Claire has been a regular volunteer at The Field since she happened by it on a walk to the bluebell woods in 2014. Noticing some people working there, she went in to ask what it was all about. The following Saturday, Claire joined the volunteers and has become a regular ever since. Having parents that were avid gardeners (and who were from an agricultural background), Claire has always been interested in organic gardening and community living and working and

has previously been involved in community growing projects in the UK, Australia and Africa. While Claire enjoys most tasks at The Field and is happy to muck in depending on what's needed (with the exception of heavier work), she has a particular fondness for growing salad leaves and herbs.

Claire is hoping that this year will afford her the opportunity to experiment with growing a few more herbs, possibly even some of the less usual ones such as purslane and lamb's quarters. Her favourite though is sorrel. It's lemony flavour is a key ingredient in many of her soup and salad recipes including – sorrel, courgette, mint & lemon salad (all from The Field of course). I think I will be trying those too!

Seeing many of the younger generation getting involved with The Field helps Claire stay optimistic about the future. "A lot of younger people are coming and learning about what we do and are genuinely interested" says Claire, "...three generations are involved and it is wonderful to see". I am sure everyone will agree with that statement. Thank you Claire.



A thank you from Belgium

To the Trustees of The Field

When we were in Butterstone recently, over Christmas, we read in The Bridge that you are having a reflective meeting in January.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Maddie who, last summer, provided at short notice, and at a very reasonable price, lots of flowers from The Field which we used to decorate the tables in Butterstone Village Hall where we celebrated our 60th birthdays. The flowers were much admired by our guests and contributed greatly to making the Hall look extra special. So many, many thanks. We enclose a picture of a few of the vases with your flowers.

We would like to wish you all the best for The Field in 2016 and will be back buying your produce when we are next in Butterstone.

With best wishes,

Friends from Leuven, Belgium



In November, The Dunkeld and Birnam Historical Society & The Field sponsored a very well received talk

by Geoff Squires from the Hutton Institute on 'Food Production from the First Crops to the Present Day'.

The talk covered crops and croplands from domestication 10,000 years ago, through to the present state of soil degradation and reliance on imports for food security.

The historical element was fascinating but the talk also raised some serious questions about the future including - will intensification continue to degrade soils and even start to drive down output? And is our food supply now too vulnerable to external influence – disruption by global terrorism, variation in world cereal harvests, future phosphate wars and volcanic eruption? Threats to soil and food security will increase and need to be tackled. Technology alone will not solve the problems.

Hearing this being explained so succinctly helps us realise just how important projects like ours at The Field are for the future.

Getting involved

If you are interested in getting involved with The Field, getting in touch is easy. You can call Dave Amos 01350 727763 or check out our website – www.dunkeldfield.co.uk. Membership forms can be collected from the Library, The Field gate, from Dave Amos (2 Water Wynd, Dunkeld) or from any member of The Field. Completed forms should be dropped off at Dave's. You will also find us on Facebook... @ The Field Dunkeld & Birnam

We are a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) No: SC042496

Our objectives are:

- To advance citizenship and community development by encouraging cooperation and mutual support to produce food organically for local consumption in a changing economic and physical environment.
- To achieve this by managing a sustainable and environmentally responsible growing project for the benefit of all.
- To promote education within the community in organic food growing, care, harvest and distribution and ensure a better understanding of the connection between what we eat and how it is produced, delivered and prepared.