



CHERRY TREE NURSERY ANNUAL NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2009



We would like to send midwinter greetings to all our volunteers, friends, supporters, customers and neighbours as we approach the twentieth anniversary of the opening of Cherry Tree Nursery. At the same time we would like to announce the imminent launch of our new website www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk, where at last you will be able to find full information about what we do. Please take a look!

Cherry Tree will be celebrating its twentieth birthday in April 2010. We hope to mark it by unveiling our hopes and plans for the next twenty years. We are working with Rob Buckley, from the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills, to design sustainable, low energy, low impact locally-sourced buildings to replace our current crumbling Portacabins which have kept us going for the last twenty years. As we dodge the buckets catching the drips from the roof, dressed in our thermal waterproof clothing, we dream of well-insulated living buildings to enhance our well-being. We will be revealing the design plan at our twentieth birthday celebrations. We hope to launch our fundraising programme at the same time, but this depends on sorting out our new lease with Bournemouth Borough Council. The finalisation for this has been, very unfortunately, delayed, and we are naturally very concerned.



A major achievement for 2009 was successfully raising funds for, and purchasing, a replacement for our fifteen-year-old minibus', which had become unreliable. A special photo-call event was organised to thank all the people who made this possible. Volunteers have already visited Salisbury Market, Chestnut Nursery, and the reindeer at Broomhill, as well as doing the Cherry Tree Christmas shopping, thanks to the new vehicle, and have pronounced it 'a lovely minibus'.

Cherry Tree is also delighted to announce that approval has now been granted for the launch of a major three-year research project here. This will be conducted by the Department of Psychology at Bournemouth University, in conjunction with their Centre for Well-Being and Quality of Life. The theme of this research is to be 'The Horticultural Nursery as a Restorative Environment'. It will investigate the surroundings and circumstances that promote well-being, i.e. why it works!

We currently have 160 people on our books, with another six due to start early in the new year. Twenty-nine new people started during 2009 and twenty-two moved on. The need for projects such as ours remains urgent, and it is essential that we remain here doing our job as well as we can.

We have started a Numeracy class again this winter, to accompany Literacy, and 'English with the use of Computers'. We are very fortunate to have an excellent teacher in Sue Cheeseman. Our good friend, Diana Guy, continues to run a series of fascinating courses for our volunteers, and the general public. This coming winter, the course will be 'Sustainable Gardening'. During 2009 volunteers have enjoyed a 'Winter Warmer' and two courses on herbs, held to accompany our Herb Fortnight, when volunteers also visited a herb garden and had a session here learning how to make herbal balms and teas.

At the beginning of the year, successful fundraising enabled the installation of an upgraded electricity supply. We are currently engaged on a polytunnel repair and improvement programme, made more urgent following the loss of two tunnels in the recent gales. We are trying to continue to improve our sales area to make it more accessible and informative for customers. We are extending our covered sales area, repairing and replacing benches, and improving the floor cover.



Fundraising is becoming much harder - indeed our income from grants and donations fell by 40% in the last financial year. We therefore need to increase our income from plant sales wherever we can: they currently cover half our running costs.

We had our best-ever plant sale in March. This summer we won the Ellingham & Ringwood Agricultural Show 'Nurseries Cup' for the seventh time. We were invited to compete in the Bournemouth In Bloom Competition for the first time, and won the prize for 'The Best Improved Horticultural Project'. The Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve, which includes our nursery, won the Green Flag Award again.

We have again welcomed many visitors over the course of the year. We are always pleased to see our friends from the New Leaf Allotment Project, Canford School, Michael House and Chestnut Nursery who are all regular visitors. We continue to welcome other school parties. This year's school groups included Winton Arts & Media College, who did a photographic project here, and Corfe Hills School, who held a Sponsor Day for us and raised nearly £1,000!



Other visitors have included Charles Walker MP, who has a special interest in mental health, Capt & Mrs Fulford-Dobson, Lord Shaftesbury, Sir Christopher Lees, Victoria McDonough, (the High Sheriff of Dorset), Tina Baker from the Community Foundation, and the MIND Women's Group.

The Function Room is popular with local groups, such as our neighbours at the Stour Valley Caravan Park, who use it for their bi-monthly meetings and the Dorset NHS Trust Foundation, who use it for awaydays.

During the Big Green Fortnight in May this year we were asked to host a Plant Exchange, which we combined with a children's event; we also supplied the plants for the Big Green Bus. Our children's events are becoming increasingly popular. We held an extremely successful art and planting event during the Stour Valley Festival, a lovely event right on our doorstep when we open the nursery all weekend.

We were very pleased to be asked to host 'One World Week' in October, in recognition of our volunteers' contribution to water projects in Latin America. Displays were set up in the shop, the barn and the Function Room and a fascinating series of films and presentations took place every afternoon.

After potting nearly 23,000 plants at the Potathon, volunteers thoroughly enjoyed a visit to Abbotsbury Gardens and Swannery. Other outings have included Durmast House & Gardens, Edmondsham House and Gardens, Blashford Lakes, the Great Dorset Steam Fair, a trip on the steamship Waverley, and a visit to the Amateur Gardening Show. Volunteers had delicious lunches at both Canford School and the Grange Hotel.



The Mindout Players 'Over the Rainbow' group put on a play for us about discrimination, and the Penny Serenaders organised a concert for us, where volunteers had a brilliant time. We were pleased to have plant stalls again at Stanbridge Mill and JP Morgan Chase.

During the winter volunteers enjoyed a series of talks, films and presentations. They have recently learned how to make a hazel chair, and have had a talk on dinosaurs, as well as watching films on organic farming and 'earth whisperers' in New Zealand.



The Volunteers' Water group, having raised £25,000 to fund four safe clean piped drinking water projects in Bolivia. This year they raised nearly £5,000 to pay for a similar system for a remote community in Ecuador. We were extremely fortunate that Linda Bowditch was able to visit the community and came to tell us about it. Volunteers also had another fascinating talk from John Chudleigh who had visited Bolivia in the 1960s. The band, 'Expresión Bolivia', continues to entertain visitors to our plant sales.

The annual caravan holiday to Weymouth has now become a tradition and really enhances volunteers' lives. Our new cat, Twinkle, has settled in well.



We had a very sad loss in June, when volunteer Bob Anderson, who had been attending Cherry Tree since our earliest days, died suddenly. We held a memorial for him here and the Function Room was packed as we remembered him with love and laughter. We have established an annual camping trip in his memory, as he loved camping, and a very happy trip to Swanage resulted.

We are sorry to say goodbye to our very hard-working Treasurer, Keith James, who has retired, as has fellow-Trustee, Alan Livingstone and our patron, The Right Reverend John Kirkham. They will all be greatly missed, as will our Office Organiser, Julie Gill, who is leaving in January

to go travelling, and our Book-keeper of the last seventeen years, David Pressey, who will be beginning a well-deserved retirement. We wish them all well, and know they will keep in touch.

We suffered a recent break-in, when the back door of the office was destroyed, but fortunately the alarm went off, preventing further damage. We need to thank the Rotary Club of Bournemouth North and Mike Clements for upgrading our security system.

We now have wildlife symbols on the plants for sale in our retail area, to encourage people to plant with wildlife in mind. We also have a resident fox. Recent special wildlife sightings have included a nuthatch, and a lesser-spotted woodpecker, both feeding from the bird table by our wildlife pond, and abundant newts, grass snakes and slow worms, butterflies and moths.

It is good to see more people buying vegetable plants, fruit trees and bushes, and herbs. There is a definite resurgence in interest in growing food locally and with respect for the environment.

This year's Cherry Tree calendar features wildlife photos all taken here by our volunteer, Mike Daly. Please contact us if you would like one of our calendars, which give the dates of our special events for 2010. The calendar and the Christmas card were again designed by one of our volunteers, Cheryl. The photo inside the red globe on the front of our card has a very special story: last summer it was carried on the twelve hour walk over the mountains to our sister communities in Bolivia, so for the first time they could see the people who had raised the money for their water supplies.

The volunteers in the picture also wrote the villagers a letter, which was translated into Spanish. We reach across the world!

Cheryl needs further thanks for her magnificent work producing the Display Boards in our shop in time for the Open Day. Our shop display, together with our website, now provide really good information about us.

Our life-saving Disability Rights Adviser, June Perryman, has now worked with us for ten years, an occasion for a tea and cake celebration earlier in the year. We also need to thank Chrissie for a soup lunch and a salad lunch, Julie, Elaine and Carole for a very special Pudding Day, and Helga for opening her very special garden to the public several times and giving us the proceeds of tea, cake and plant sales.



We would like to send special love to volunteers, John Ellis and Jane Colleau, who have not been able to come into the nursery for a while due to illness, but are still with us in spirit.

We would like to send congratulations to our dear friend, Iris Frampton, on reaching her 80th birthday, and thank her for her generosity to us. A group of volunteers are going on the Great Santa Fun Run organised by the Rotary Club of Wimborne at Badbury Rings – wearing Santa suits of course!

We want to thank everyone who has helped us in 2009 and over the past years. We would like to mention the Forge Garage who held a stall for us at Winton Carnival, FR Aviation for their generous donation of a milk float, and our regular supporters including Kinson Conservative Sunday lunch club, Jay's Fish & Chips, George Fry, Miss Jeanne Bisgood, Herbal Harmony, JWM Dog Training, Bournemouth Lions International, the Rotary Club of Bournemouth North, our friends from the Parks Department and Rick Raumann.

We would also like to thank our long-term supporters the Alliss Merlo Charity Pro-AM Golf, the Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Foundation, Arthur & Doreen King, the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust, the family of Douglas Lampard, the Incorporated Bournemouth Free Church Council, Margaret Levinson, JP Morgan Chase, and the Talbot Village Trust.

Without all the volunteers, friends, shop helpers, supporters, organisations, businesses and trusts who keep us going we could do nothing.

We leave you with a message received today from our friends in Ecuador:

Just wanted to say, between all the talk of projects, funds, people and places, that people like you, and everyone at Cherry Tree, make the world go round remember that what we are doing together may not amount to much, but at the end of the day, it's everything. Keep doing it, cos whatever it is, it's important.



Our love and thanks to all of you, as always, and good wishes for a peaceful 2010.



Reg. Charity No 900325

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Please consider supporting us by making a regular contribution by standing order or remembering us in your will.
Thank you.

