



# CHERRY TREE NURSERY

SUMMER 2010 NEWSLETTER



Cherry Tree celebrated the twentieth anniversary of starting work on site on 15th April this year. Looking back, we realise how miraculous it is that we are still here and flourishing, when we remember how impossible our survival seemed in the early days. Along the road from an overgrown and flooded rubbish dump, to a widely-respected happy working community, we have gained many wonderful friends and supporters, so thanks to all of you!

Early this year, we received the marvellous news that Bournemouth Borough Council had agreed to grant us a twenty-one year lease for the site. Previously, we had a short-term lease which had to be renewed every three years. This gives us the security we need to make long-term plans. From the very earliest days, when volunteers said 'I don't know what I would do without this place. It won't ever close will it?', we have made the promise that Cherry Tree will always be here for them. The longer lease reinforces that promise.

We have been fortunate over the years to have been given well-used portacabins by a variety of organisations when they were replacing them with new ones. We have stretched every inch of life out of these buildings, but their lifetime is long over. We have become used to leaking roofs, the smell of damp and the growth of mould and fungus in our buildings, but we know our volunteers deserve better.

Wonderfully for us, Rob Buckley and Adam Slatter from the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills agreed to help us. We have been working together to design a Sustainable Replacement Building Programme to fulfil our current needs in the best and most environmentally friendly way possible.

The programme is designed to minimise disruption to the nursery, by prefabricating as much as possible off site. We need to maximise the use of space, which is very limited; the new plan increases the working and relaxing area by 40%. The buildings will be adaptable to our changing needs. We aim to make the programme as sustainable as it is possible to be, with minimal energy requirements, built from locally-sourced natural materials. Most importantly, the buildings must provide the safe, welcoming, healthy environment we owe to our volunteers.

The highlight of our Twentieth Birthday Party, (apart from the delicious food produced by our fabulous catering team) was the unveiling of the amazing model, and the presentation of the design to an eager audience, by Rob and Adam in a marquee specially hired for the occasion. They explained how the building programme will be in three separate phases, allowing for breaks in between for fundraising and recovery.

So the great Sustainable Replacement Building Fundraising Programme, the largest in SWOP's history, was launched.

Our local friends and supporters have been fantastic. Local groups, businesses and organisations have held collections for us. Our volunteers organised a sponsored walk, people have taken out standing orders and we raffled a painting by our Propagator, Trevor.

The sponsored walk was a fantastic success, thanks to the hard work of walk organiser, Dottie, and raised over £2,500!!

The total cost of the three building phases is estimated to be £507,000.

You can see our progress displayed on the thermometer in the shop. So far we have raised over £95,000 with a further £75,000 promised once work is under way. We have a long way to go, and we need your help – any support will be greatly appreciated.

The living nature of the building is fundamental. At SWOP we believe that our surroundings have an enormous impact on our mental well-being. Our wonderful volunteers, who have not had an easy time and who have been deprived, through no fault of their own, of opportunities other people take for granted, deserve the very best buildings we can provide to work and relax in.

While on the theme of the natural world, it has been a good year for wildlife at Cherry Tree, with an even greater variety of birds visiting our wildlife pond. The frogspawn hatched successfully, followed by all ten bird boxes being used. The lesser-spotted woodpecker has visited, along with jays, fieldfares and male and female reed buntings. We plan to develop a swallow nesting area for next year. The common newts are especially prolific this year and the frogs and newts have returned to the greenhouse. A good selection of caterpillars, butterflies and bees are often seen, and a baby weasel was found. The wild plums and cherries flowered profusely in the spring.

Bournemouth University's Department of Psychology have embarked on their major three year eco-psychology research programme called 'The Horticultural Nursery as a Restorative Environment'. We hope this will reinforce the intimate connection between the natural world and our well-being.

Vegetable and herb plants, fruit trees and bushes are becoming more popular, and we are producing many more of these. We are continuing the Schools Project, welcoming groups of children for visits and special events and helping set up wildlife areas in schools. In September we will be holding a Young People's Community Storytelling event to coincide with the Stour Valley Festival.

As part of our growing role in the community we continue to give talks and presentations to a wide variety of groups, and invite them for tours of the nursery.

We have 159 people on our books. Sixteen new volunteers have joined us this year and twenty-one have moved on. We very sadly lost two volunteers this year. John Ellis and Mike Walker are both remembered with love.

We have had some notable exam successes among volunteers this year. Three volunteers have started full-time work and three have undertaken part-time employment, while two have started full-time training. We have now had three former volunteers taken on at a local nursery. Another former volunteer is now working as a self-employed gardener.

Numeracy has been added to the courses we have on offer, thanks to our volunteer teacher, Sue Cheeseman. Our winter horticultural course run by Diana Guy this year was 'Sustainable Gardening', which was both topical and popular.

It became obvious that a new minibus was urgently needed, so a fundraising drive was launched. Due to the generosity of many of our supporters and friends, we now have a lovely new vehicle which we share with our sister project at Chestnut Nursery. Numerous visits and outings have now been enjoyed in this new vehicle including Salisbury Market, the Ice Cream Farm, Stanbridge Mill and the largest houseplant nursery in Europe. The minibus took the volunteers for their annual caravan holiday in Weymouth, was indispensable for the Christmas shopping, and will also be taking them for the annual Bob Anderson Camping Trip near Corfe Castle soon.

Staff come and staff go. We had a well-supported 'Farewell Party' for Julie Gill and David Pressey, and welcomed Lisa-Marie Barrett, our new Plant Sales and Office Organiser, and Dawn Northover, our new book-keeper. To everyone's delight, Sophie Manners has joined the board of Trustees, and SWOP's new Treasurer is Ruth Markham.

In December 2009, the Dorset Business Awards chose SWOP as Dorset Charity of the Year 2010. We have also been shortlisted for the Wessex Charity of the Year. The winner of this prestigious award will be announced at the Winchester Guildhall at the end of September. At the same time we are also one of three charities shortlisted for the Co-operative Partnership Award which will be announced at the beginning of November. We also won the Bournemouth in Bloom Award for the 'Best new horticultural project'. So all in all, we can say we are getting more widely known!

A lot of time during the winter was spent repairing old and worn out items. Our slab paths need a lot of attention and we lost two polytunnels in the gales. A potting station has been redesigned and rebuilt, and a hard standing area has been built for bulk handling.

Thanks to a generous grant, we were able to continue the work of upgrading the Sales Area by extending and re-covering the Sales Tunnel. Volunteers laid a new floor and designed and built new benches. With one side left open, customers are fully enjoying the plants on display there, and it has, as usual, been full of bedding plants during the spring.

2009-10 was our best year ever for plant sales, and included our biggest earnings ever from a Plant Sale at the end of March. This reflects the enormous efforts we are putting in to extend the range of varieties we have on offer. We grow many more trees, bamboos and larger plants now, as well as extending the varieties of our perennials, alpines, grasses and bedding available. Herbs, along with fruit and vegetable plants, are becoming increasingly popular.

This year's one-day Potathon passed its target, completing 20,574 plants. It was followed by the Harry Roffey Day trip, this year to Staunton Country Park. We would like to thank Harry's widow, Ida, for her ongoing support of this annual event.

2010 marked our new website, [www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk](http://www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk), becoming fully up and running, with fantastic help from Ian Smith and from Simon Cox who made a short version of the film for us as well as a short video to introduce our new building fund. We are getting more 'hits' every week and it has become another way to get our message out. If you haven't done so already, please take a look!

As well as organising a sponsored walk to raise funds for our new building, entirely on their own initiative, a group of volunteers took part in the 'Great Santa Fun Run' at Badbury Rings. They have greatly enjoyed a series of herbal workshops run by Catherine Marshall, the latest being

'Pot Pourri and Sleep Pillows'. She now aims to help volunteers with their plan to develop a special Cherry Tree Nursery Gardener's Hand Cream.

The nursery will be open as usual during the Stour Valley Festival on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September, with a special children's 'Potting & Poetry' event on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>. We will be hosting One World Week again this year from 18-22 October.

We have more people than ever to thank this year, and can only mention a few by name including: FR Aviation, for the donation of two milk floats, and the Forge Garage for running a stall at Winton Carnival for us. We now need June Perryman of the Citizen's Advice Bureau, more than ever, as life becomes increasingly difficult for the disadvantaged and voiceless. We are deeply moved by the generosity of small groups such as St George's Methodist Church in Boscombe, who raised nearly £1,000 for us. We would also particularly like to mention the continual support throughout the last twenty years from Margaret Levinson, sister of Cyril Speller, our founder and inspiration.

This year, as always, we need to thank our regular supporters from Jay's Fish & Chips, Kinson Conservative Club, the Penny Serenaders and Rotary Club of Bournemouth North and all our regular customers and supporters whose loyalty and enthusiasm inspire us constantly. Special thanks this year go to the Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Foundation, the Archer Trust, Arthur Moseley, Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company, Dorset HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust, Helga Aldersey, the Holdenhurst Charity, the Incorporated Free Church Council, Inge Axt-Simmonds, JP Morgan Chase, Pitt-Rivers Charitable Trust, Richard Bagley, the Rotary Club of Westbourne, the family of the late Steve Saunders, and the Talbot Village Trust.

Above all of course, we would like to thank our volunteers and friends who work hard every day to make Cherry Tree the haven of peace, friendship and love we all need in a selfish and greedy world.



That all may have laughter, hope and dignity

**Cherry Tree Nursery**  
Northbourne  
Tel: 01202-593537  
[www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk](http://www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk)

Opening Times:  
Weekdays 8am to 3.30pm  
Saturdays 9am to 3pm (summer)