

# Cherry Tree Nursery

## Annual Newsletter 2014

We would like to welcome you to Cherry Tree Nursery's annual Open Days for 2014.

Although we don't celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> birthday until April 2015, the first Open Day was held in 1989, the year before work started on site, so these are our 26<sup>th</sup> Open Days!

We owe so much to the wonderful people who had the vision all those years ago of a supportive loving community, working together to grow and sell plants. They did not know then, and could not have foreseen, how greatly this project would now be needed. We have over 170 people on our books, with more wanting to join us, and continual enquiries coming in from people in other parts of the country wanting to set up something similar.

Suddenly there is a much wider recognition of the worth of what is now called 'ecotherapy'. Every school and care home seems to be setting up a sensory garden, and community gardens and food-growing projects are arising everywhere. Surveys are being done showing the improvement in wellbeing, social contact, self-esteem and general mental and physical health resulting from being in the fresh air and helping plants to grow and flourish. which in turn helps people to grow and flourish too. We have certainly seen an upsurge in people buying vegetable plants, fruit bushes and trees, herbs and edible perennials, showing a resurging interest in food-growing. And Bournemouth is now a sustainable Food City!

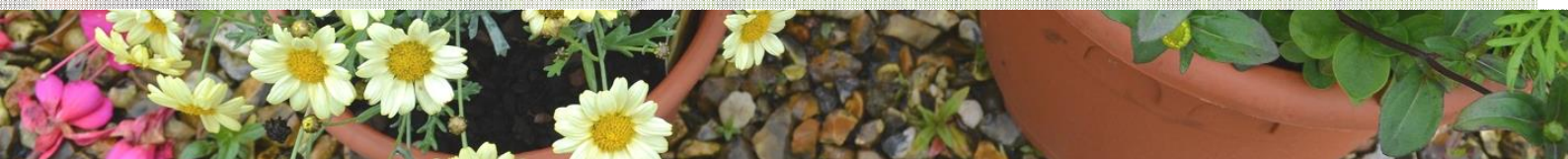
As you can see, Phase 2 of our Sustainable Building Programme is now complete, and work is well underway on Phase 3. We would like to thank everyone who has made possible this amazing achievement. certainly something to celebrate!

Phase 2 has been of huge benefit to volunteers who

have greatly appreciated the lovely warm and pleasant space where they can work, have their literacy and numeracy classes, their reviews and meetings, their disability rights advice sessions, their english with the use of computer lessons, and a quiet place to rest and recover when in distress. The wooden beams, the natural materials and the love with which the building was created all contribute to this feeling of wellbeing and peace.

We moved in to Phase 2 in the late autumn, and started to fundraise for the third phase. the new offices, staff room, meeting room and first aid room, the centre of life at Cherry Tree. Amazingly the first donations towards it came from the builders themselves, who were very anxious to return and complete the project. We had wonderful support from the Dorset Golf and Country Club who presented us with an astonishingly large donation and from Tish and Maria who ran the Bournemouth Marathon in aid of the new structures. With further support from our brilliant volunteers, who held stalls to sell items they had made in their knitting and sewing groups, the fundraising was soon well underway, and, through the magnificent generosity of three local charitable trusts, we were able to announce before an amazed audience at our annual Christmas Party that work would begin in 2014! We cannot thank everybody who contributed to this undertaking enough, and are sure that, when completed, the buildings will fulfil everyone's faith in the project.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April, our 24<sup>th</sup> Birthday. we celebrated it with a Ploughman's Lunch the week before. the cranes came for the traumatic act of moving our old offices. We did not believe they would survive the move, but the hub of operations was safely reinstalled at the other end of the nursery, by the



barn. Nothing works as well, like the phones, the internet and the chip and pin machine, and we can no longer see people coming and going, but we are all doing our best! It has been very difficult for our volunteers, for whom the office is the place they go to share their problems and their delights, and for answers to their questions. We are having to break the basic rules of therapeutic horticulture, that volunteers must be able to see the office from the nursery, and staff must be able to see the volunteers at work, and volunteers are finding it difficult, but we are greatly encouraged by watching the building work progress, and by the joy of having the timber frame go up, and cannot imagine what it will be like working in dry buildings. The rain coming through the roof has become quite normal!

Apart from food plants, we find our customers still want cottage garden-type plants rather than shrubs, and the range of plants we grow and have on sale has changed to reflect this. We are producing a lot more roses, trees and perennials, as well as hanging baskets and containers. Sunday opening remains a great success and we are very grateful to everyone who comes in to help at weekends. There is a lovely atmosphere and customers enjoy having tea and coffee at the nursery while they are here.

Our big plant sale events . the remaining dates for this year are 5<sup>th</sup> July and 20<sup>th</sup> September . are increasingly popular. Our volunteers now have their own band, the Propagators who play lovely music for us and we have an even wider range of stalls.

A mouth-watering addition to our plant sales is the provision of barbecued food by the generous members of the Rotary Clubs of Bournemouth North and Westbourne. We enjoy continued support from our local rotary clubs, which we truly appreciate. Working with local groups and organisations is very important to us. Many support us in different ways and we give them talks and tours of the site. Helga Aldersey and Ian Connell have both opened their lovely gardens in aid of Cherry Tree. Groups visiting include the JP Morgan Green Team, the Kinson Community Forum and the National Women's Register.

It is essential for Cherry Tree to work alongside the local community. We have

developed close relationships with local gardening groups, and the local Parks Department. Organisations like JP Morgan and Nationwide hold plant sales for us, and Liverpool Victoria and HSBC come and work alongside us, as do a large number of students learning about projects in the community. The local branch of Moose International has been exceptionally supportive, helping us with our day-to-day projects. We would also like to mention George Fry of Pokesdown who as their contribution to our building programme donated and installed a large screen on which to show informative videos and photos. It was inaugurated with a presentation on recycling from our local recycling officer. The Ferndown Inner Wheel presented us with a top grade heavy duty sack truck as part of the national %Wheels+ event, now much loved by Ivan. Dr Geoffrey Searle, the psychiatrist currently working with the Crisis Team, completed a mammoth cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats in aid of Cherry Tree and the Motor Neurone Disease Association. Volunteers much enjoyed his presentation of the cheque and demonstration of his reclining bicycle.

We won the Bournemouth in Bloom Gold Award for the best small retail shop, and the Ellingham and Ringwood Agricultural Show Nurseries Cup. We also participated in the Family Show at Meyrick Park. And Trevor is now the author of a monthly column, Trevor's Gardening Tips, in the new publication, Kinson Eye!

13 years ago, we produced a video, the Cherry Tree Nursery Story which has been immensely useful for promoting and providing information to people about the work and ethos of the nursery. It has also been widely used by people wishing to set up similar projects in their own places. Although the value and nature of what we do remains the same, the video now looks very old, so Simon, our filmmaker, returned to make an updated version. He was shocked to see how much has changed with regard to the care and support available to volunteers outside the nursery, and the increased pressure on charities to fill the gaps. He also had not realised how much the need for projects like Cherry Tree has grown. We hope that DVDs of his new documentary celebrating 25 years at Cherry Tree Nursery will be available at the Open Days.

Over the course of the winter, volunteers were busy erecting a donated metal barn-type building at the end of the site for storage and indoor working. They also put the second cover on our donated twinspan, which is used for winter protection and production of early stock.



A lot of damage was caused by the bad weather over the winter period, and several polytunnels lost their covers in the gales. We would like to thank all the local community groups and individuals who helped us with the cost of repairing them.

Another new project volunteers embarked on this winter was building benches to grow plants on in the greenhouse. This protects against pests and diseases, and greatly improves working conditions. By building the benches ourselves, using recycled materials, we can save 50% of the cost, and several local groups have already offered to sponsor the cost of a bench.

In May we revived the traditional 'Potathon' in a small one day form in order to pot all our *Griselinia littoralis*, which is our best-selling plant, in one day. There was a wonderful feeling of communal working as volunteers potted alongside others they had not worked with before.

Our horticultural teacher, Diana Guy, followed her fascinating course on Trees with three sessions on the Plants and Gardens of New Zealand, in February. Her next course is to be about Fruit, at volunteers' request, and they have already visited the Community Orchard at the New Leaf Allotment project.

Sue Cheeseman continues to provide Literacy, Numeracy, and English with the use of Computers, now in new and much-improved facilities. Volunteers have gained an enormous amount from the Healthy Eating and Cooking on a Budget Sessions organised by Annie Newbury. The atmosphere (and smells) in the tearoom are wonderful on those days, and volunteers gain so much in skills, motivation and independence from these classes. We were horrified therefore to learn that the funding has been withdrawn from such an essential service, and are hoping to find a way to enable it to continue.

We were very fortunate to be awarded a free 4-night holiday in Cornwall by the Landmark Trust. A small group of volunteers, some of whom have no family and have never had a holiday, had a fantastic time. They had long walks, home cooking and even went horse-riding! Other volunteers have chosen to go to Chichester again this year for their annual caravan holiday, and have enjoyed the usual trips and outings, including a good selection of walks and garden visits.

One World Week in October provided a fascinating mix of presentations and films, and the volunteers' Bolivia group enjoyed hosting visitors from Quaker

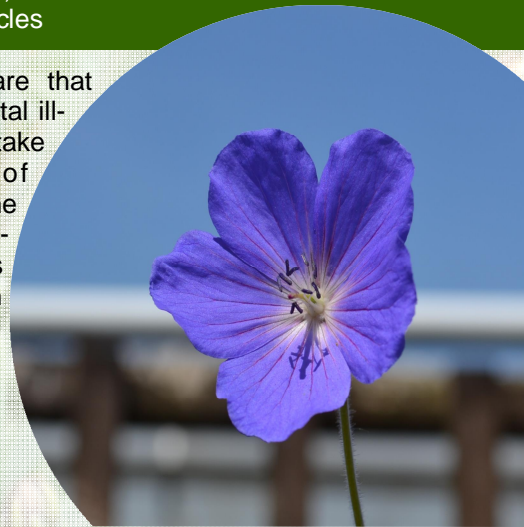
Bolivia Link to celebrate the completion of the ninth water project they have made possible.

Another project volunteers are thrilled to be involved in is the Wildlife Garden at the new Hengistbury Head visitor centre. They had a preview of the centre before it opened, and are looking forward to working in the garden in the future. They continue to actively support the local Food Bank. A group thoroughly enjoyed a herbal workshop in February, and everyone attended a stunning talk about Talbot Village from Christopher Lees.

We were very sorry to learn that our long-term patron, Sir Stephen Hammick, had passed away earlier this year. He was especially active and supportive of our project in its early years. We are, however, pleased to welcome as a new patron the retired Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Mrs Anthony Pitt-Rivers. We also have two new trustees. James Robinson, a Poole-based trustee, and Iggy Harling, a volunteer who has been a trustee of several charities.

We have lost several of our long-term volunteers this year, who many of our supporters will remember well: the lovely Lorraine Goddard, Bob Ferris, our first volunteer, and George Rampley. More recently a fairly new volunteer, Stephen Gulliford, also passed away. All these members of the Cherry Tree family were remembered at the non-denominational Blessing and re-Dedication Ceremony held at our 24<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, thanks to the kindness of Rev Sue. We will be continuing our newly established Annual Day or Celebration and Remembering in honour of all the people we have lost, to be held on 31 October this year. One of our volunteers shares a lovely quote about this event: 'What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone, but what is woven into the lives of others'. Pericles

All the indications are that the incidence of mental ill-health is rising. To take the example of depression alone, the use of antidepressants is soaring. 12.5 million more tablets were





prescribed in 2012 than in 2007, and the horrifying number of 1 in 6 people now experience clinical depression. However, 35% of adults with depression are not in contact with any mental health services. Depression is often associated with debt, unemployment, and poor housing.

While 50% of lifetime mental illness starts before the age of 14, 76% of children aged 5 to 15 with mental health problems are receiving no treatment. (Above information all taken from the Independent)

Paul Farmer, the Chief Executive of MIND, said recently "Mental health services are in crisis". In the face of the systematic and deliberate dismantling of the Welfare State, and the privatisation of the NHS, mental health services are disappearing overnight. While mental health is 28% of the country's disease burden, it only receives 13% of the funding. MIND found that 1 in 10 people have to wait more than a year to start treatment.

It is our experience that the number of people in mental hospitals is rising, because the preventative and early intervention services are no longer available, whilst at the same time there are fewer beds available. According to the BBC, 1700 beds have been cut, and the number of people having to travel up to 300 miles to seek emergency treatment has more than doubled in two years. Mental health trusts are putting people into Bed and Breakfast accommodation in order to free up beds.

In the opinion of our Disability Rights Adviser, "Austerity equals poverty and despair for those unable to understand the requirements of an ever more complicated benefits system and who don't have access to advice and help or are too unwell to seek it".

A volunteer just wrote in relation to our motto "Caring for People, Caring the Plants" "Plants are non-threatening and we learn to relax into the work and feel at ease with our surroundings. To connect with nature in this way gives us a sense of wellbeing, being grounded, being comfortable in our own skin. Cherry Tree fulfils all my needs and more: it is where I have evolved from the person I was to the person I am today, and I like what I see now. Compassion, love and acceptance are all anyone can hope for. Cherry Tree Nursery has this in abundance."

At this stage in writing this newsletter, a volunteer came in and said, "I just can't do without this place. It has become part of my life, a better way of life."

A huge thank you to everyone whose contribution, in whatever form it takes, has enabled our project to grow and continue. As our volunteers care for and support each other on a daily basis, we are inspired more than ever by their example of love, tolerance, understanding and respect. Thank you



*"Inside us all there is a light that guides our spirit, our conscience, and our innate capacity for goodness. Acknowledging the light in ourselves and others, responding to it in those we love, and crucially, seeking out the light in those we dislike, must become an essential part of everyday life, for each person is unique, precious, a child of the universe."*

Cherry Tree Nursery  
01202 593537  
Off New Road Roundabout, Northbourne,  
Bournemouth, Dorset BH10 7DA  
[www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk](http://www.cherrytreenursery.org.uk)  
E-mail: [contactus@cherrytreenursery.org.uk](mailto:contactus@cherrytreenursery.org.uk)

