

GROWING TOGETHER

The Self-Sufficiency Group

August 2024

Newsletter



***GROWING TOGETHER Self-Sufficiency group** exists to enable and encourage its members to practice self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and maintain a "sustainable life style" in a fast changing worldwide environment*

View this newsletter at:-

www.ehss.org.uk

Indoor meetings are held at 19.30 on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the:-

Triangle Centre, Liss. GU33 7DX

Contacts:-

President: Alec Fry

fry.alec@gmail.com

Chairman: Sally Elborough

sallyelborough@gmail.com

Membership: Ann Brockhurst

01428 653355

Treasurer: Andy Tate

ahjtate@gmail.com

Secretary: Frances Bassom

secretary@ehss.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Dru Furneaux

07876731661 01730 814193

druurneaux@btinternet.com

Our meeting in August is on:

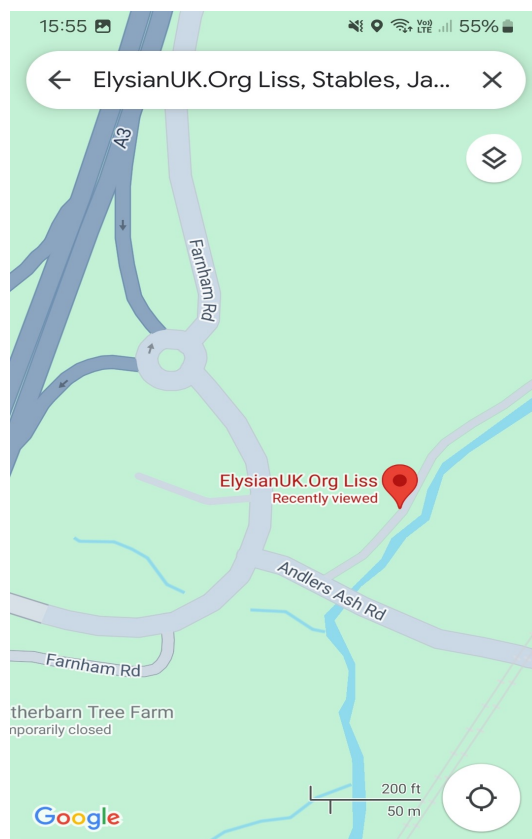


Wednesday 14th August 7-9. "Kay, one of our managers, will be here to greet you." Jo Mumford Head of Education & learning and DDSL Elysian

Office at Westland Farm site: 07944 875155

Office at Liss site: 07588 905 591

www.elysianuk.org



This is a charity: please look it up for details of what it does and who it helps.

Elysian at Andlers Ash Road, Nr Liss, Hampshire:

We highly recommend using 'What Three Words' to ensure you can find us! The WTW links can be found below.

Janche Stables, Andlers Ash Road, Liss, Hampshire, GU33 7LU

WHAT THREE WORDS:

<https://w3w.co/drag.gazes.quest>

Drive through the first gates and park on your right where you will see a 'Visitors Parking' sign.

Resume of our July meeting:

The Lodsworth Market Garden run by Kate Green and her husband provided us with an interesting and delightful evening; weather good!

We parked as requested at the Village Hall and walked for about 10 minutes through the village and out on the road heading north, till we saw the gate tucked away on our right, leading up a path to another gate enclosing the Market Garden, to be greeted by Kate. Help yourselves to the raspberries she said!

We spent the next two hours listening to her tell us about how they grow, what short amount of time they have there as they both work at other jobs, and where they sell their produce. The Lodsworth Larder and the whole food shop in Midhurst are their regulars and they do some veg boxes as well, but are always aware they cannot take on too many as they might not always be able to supply them. We saw an abundance of thriving plants, including lettuce of course at this time of year and broad beans which we were encouraged to pick for ourselves. They apologised for the weeds in the polytunnels, not enough time before our visit to get them out! As if we would mind....

One of the growing beds looked like it had a thousand moles in it....but no, it had suffered the effects of their Jack Russell digging for voles... The fenced growing area is not huge, but the site as a whole is very larger. The area to the south was not in a state to allow us to visit, but the trees there, many of which were planted as a memorial to Barry's brother Phil, are doing well. He spent a lot of time at the Community Garden Kate runs in Petworth, and although he was extremely disabled in later life he contributed his ideas and wisdom in abundance. All his friends and family spent an afternoon planting the saplings and scattering his ashes. What a lovely place to be forever! The trees Kate and her husband planted to their western boundary are well established now and shield them from houses on the road. Being a small "select" (in other words, very expensive) village, they were looked on with dismay and distrust when they bought the plot as people feared these

hippy looking owners would hold raves and have undesirable friends!!

So glad those of you who came had such a nice time.

Dru

From Tidda: tiddadobbs@btinternet.com.

The next order from Infinity Foods will be on 6th August for delivery on the 9th. (See their catalogue). Dont forget 10% will be added to the catalogue price, this money going to our Group

THE COMPOST BIN

Reap your rewards: not much to do this month, except harvest, water, weed and keep things well fed.

It does seem to be a very good year for apples, with many heavy branches bent under the weight (despite having thinned the trees well), and most vegetables are looking good.

We are picking a good crop in the greenhouse from the "mini-munch" cucumbers (two or three per day from our four plants), but only when we remember to pick these regularly while they are still only about 4 inches long, in order to keep them growing and cropping throughout the season. They seem to do very well when fed with Tomorite or seaweed fertiliser together with the tomatoes.

It has been very difficult to keep the greenhouse temperature down to a reasonable level, even when the door is open, and with both low and high ventilators fully open. However, that reduces the humidity as well; I have found it necessary to spray the gravel floor with a hose three times on a really hot day, and that was even after covering the roof with a good shading plastic.

As for outdoor watering, I do find it helps if I put the automatic sprinkler on top of a box about a foot high when watering a complete vegetable bed, and then the plants at the back will be watered as efficiently as the ones at the front. It is sometimes difficult to get an idea of the amount of water given in this way, so I place a shallow plastic food tray in the centre of the bed; when it contains half an inch of water you can reckon that that is the minimum reasonable degree of watering.

Our second early potatoes, planted at Easter, grew faster than expected and - when harvested at the normal time - we found that they are had grown to a larger size than expected; also the skin for this type of waxy salad potato was thicker than normal.

They say that these potatoes are not suitable for mashing, but we found that they were quite reasonable when treated in this way, and excellent when fried or lightly roasted.

We pulled up our broad beans which had been so devastated by blackfly, but found that most had some pods filled with sound beans. Moreover, the few blackfly who had migrated onto the adjacent runner beans soon disappeared, presumably because there were more predators than pests.

Both the runner beans and climbing French beans have done really well, as long as we kept up the constant supply of water to them; the empty plastic bottles sunk into the ground worked a treat, supplying a good supply down deep where it was needed.

Onion sets matured also matured more rapidly than we expected, and stopped growing before they reached a large size, but they are now drying and gave us a reasonable crop.

Alec

Two more outdoor meeting to go (September will be what is becoming our annual visit to Wisley): then we will be just the newsletter, monthly as usual until the spring when hopefully someone will arrange a programme of outdoor events which will inform and entertain us, so now I am appealing for articles to fill the 6 autumn, winter and early spring newsletters....or will Alec and I be "it"? I intend to go through the archive and find articles which will hopefully be of interest and add to our knowledge enjoyment.

So now a small recap of Dru's world:

Had the beautiful Bella, Labrador to stay for a month mid June to mid July (she came to Lodsworth) and she was swiftly followed by Pluto a big black Labrador belonging to friends we have made in the last couple of years. He is lying on the cool floor right now, 7.15 am while I have been writing and putting this nl together. Our sitting room is always cold, except at the moment just nice and cool!

The exceptional heat, 31 in the garden for the last 4 days has made this room a sanctuary for those who need it....not me, as when not out working, mowing etc for JP I am outside gardening (a bit of shade needed for a few hours in the middle of the day) and working on projects under the pergola by the summerhouse. I stupidly bought a very sweet round seated Edwardian chair at Lurgashal fete and

decided to recover it. what a nightmare that turned out to be: each new cover had been secured with more nails and it was just a mass of holes. Like the terrier I had, (Ruby) I would not give up....firstly giving the wooden frame 3 coats of varnish to stabilise it, then filling the holes with wood filler, and lastly painting and recovering the frame and recovering the seat, all in a lovely woollen tartan rug purchased from a charity shop for £4. So glad its finished....I am now recovering a charming footstool in a tartan fabric which started life as a beautifully mad cushion cover. In other words it was a pig to unpick....

I must hang a sign round my neck to the effect "leave it alone" or perhaps have it tattooed on my arm!!!

My hanging baskets are not hanging: at the moment while it is so hot as they just droop within hours. Last night I threw water on the florets which wouldn't have made to morning. The roses have blackspot of course, and the dahlias are doing ok as long as they get enough water. Still got plenty in the water butts from earlier on. The agapanthus are amazing! Some I repotted and are doing well and the one in the ground has trebled in size this year. I note that a few plants really need to be moved and I intend to tie string to them to remind me to do it in the autumn.

We are not growing tomatoes this year as last year we had the dreaded blight and I really didn't want to risk it....I will try again next year. I hope to have more time to do that just so long as I don't start any more stupid projects!

Waiting for a spell of wet weather to start the next indoor project; house refurb now my eyesight is so good and I can see how down at heel it is...its the inner hall and stairway that looks dreadful. Weird staining on the rear outside wall up the stairs... damp I suspect. It going to be a rubdown and apply stain block before redecorate. Dru, x

This article is from Andy and Frances:

Two years ago we noticed the fields around us turning a bit yellowish. These fields had been used for various arable crops over the years, maize, wheat, rape and barley being frequent occupiers. The tenant farmer gave up and his son was not really interested in arable crops and hence the fields had been taken up by another tenant. This had been a disaster as their new methods of direct drilling and being delayed by the weather didn't suit the soil of those fields and their spring crops of barley

failed miserably. The crop was stunted and we noticed various other interloper plants growing amongst the crop.

Then came the yellowing. My suspicions that the fields had been weedkilled proved correct and before long they were brown and withered. It looked bad. An environmental disaster you might think.

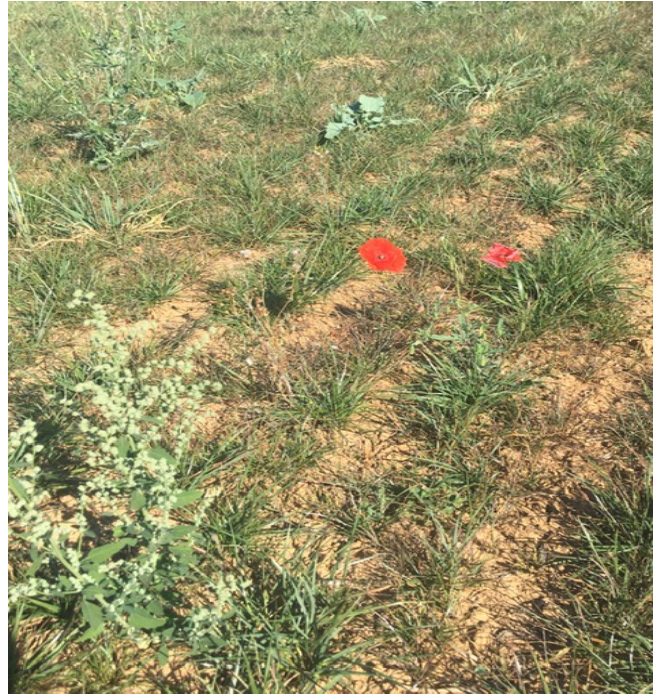
Surprisingly not so ! It turned out the fields had been taken back into the ownership of the local estate. The fields were then fenced at vast expense, harrowed, and re-seeded most with a herbal ley. Others with mostly clovers and a mix of grasses. By 2023 they were providing grazing for a flock sheep and surprisingly even enough for a crop of clover hay. The mixed clovers chicory, plantains and assorted grasses were soon attracting insects. This year in spite of the poor spring they are buzzing.

We have a number of local bee keepers and on a rare sunny day this July the dog was rather reluctant to cross the footpath in a clover field because of the bees covering the flowers.

The wide headlands and hedges are attracting lots of birds and butterflies I have seen a big hatch of burnet moths, many meadow browns, marbled whites, ringlets, gatekeepers, small skippers and even a small heath.

Rabbits are rather taking advantage and so are the deer. The estate sheep are literally lying in clover. So in two years the fields have gone from hundreds of acres of boring arable monoculture to a verdant swathe of mixed broadleaf plants that are nice to behold with a scent that fills the air and insects seem to love. Another plus is we no longer have tractors towing sprayers several times a year, we have sheep and lambs instead. Long may the fields stay in their new incarnation.

Another plus is that after assisting the stockman a couple of times we now also have permission to walk the headlands when the fields are empty rather than stick to the footpath.



Thank you so much!