

LOG

August 2015

Welcome to the LOG Newsletter for August 2015.

AGM

This will be held at our first meeting on Friday 11th September, 7.30pm, at Knighton Parish Centre, Brindsmead Road, followed by a video presentation.

The programme for 2015/16 is not yet complete. If you have any ideas for speakers then please let us know.

Summer Walk, July 17th

On a lovely sunlit Friday in July, 5 of us gathered by our cars in Markfield to look at Alison's proposed route through the surrounding countryside. We traversed open fields with sheep, meandered through shady, damp woodland with a stream running through and into a high natural hedged lane, bringing us to Lea Meadow Nature Reserve, and heard a woodpecker "yaffle". From there we headed back into woods, past the old watermill, along a lane joining part of the Leicestershire Round footpath before coming up a little hill and back to the cars. And as usual we covered lots of interesting ground in our conversations!

Long Whatton Summer Garden

The pea harvest was the best we've had in a long time. Beans not very good. Hopes of getting one sweetcorn to eat. Potatoes good. Raspberries fruiting very well and very tasty. Gooseberries from one bush in the freezer. The wasps and I have been enjoying the ones from the other bush.

Most herbs going well. Oregano a bit too well and now grows in every nook and cranny. Ditto the ash saplings. Where is ash die back when you want it? Wonderful displays of calendula and various coloured nasturtiums. Lots of lovely blue borage flowers. Unfortunately lots of weeds too.

Plenty of feline visitors. Every cat in the neighbourhood likes our garden.

Yvonne Haskins.

WINTER PROGRAMME

Friday September 11th

AGM and... a series of short video clips from the Permaculture Association.

Friday October 9th

Annual Wholefood Supper

Friday November 13th

Essential Oils
Kate Wilson

Friday December 11th

Christmas event featuring Neal's Yard products.

2016 Dates

Friday January 8th

A home produced event

Friday February 12th, Friday March 11th, Friday April 8th
tba

On 31st October 2015, Footpaths is organising a

Green Festival of Making and Mending

11am-5pm, Friends Meeting House, Queens Rd, Leicester.

This incredibly exciting and busy day is free and will include:

Hands-on stalls, talks and workshops, children's activities and swap / bring and share stalls.

The day's emphasis will be on fixing and creating things with secondhand and reclaimed materials – we want to introduce people to exciting ideas for being crafty and ingenious in an environmentally friendly way.

More information at www.leicesterfootpaths.org.uk

Visit to Stoneywell, 16th August.

Text by Robin Stevenson.



Our summer visit to Stoneywell, an Arts and Crafts cottage built into a Charnwood hillside, was an excellent chance to see Leicestershire's first 'National Trust House and Garden'. Our thanks go to Leon and Val for enabling us to see this property during the first summer of its opening to the public. On August 15th a party of ten of us enjoyed a garden tour followed by a visit to the cottage itself.

Stoneywell was designed by Ernest Gimson, and built in collaboration with his fellow architect Detmar Blow in 1898-99, out of local stones, many simply found in the boulder-clay and bedrock of the site and locality, along with huge slate lintels extracted from the Swithland quarries. The building style resonates so well with the Charnwood farmhouses around about, and introduced so many ideas that became normal in 20th century country house styling and furniture design, that it is easy to forget that it even had a designer, let alone that it was a ground-breaking and influential building. However the five Charnwood cottages that Gimson built (three originally as summer residences for different branches of his family), along with other vernacular houses that Gimson, Detmar Blow and the Barnsley brothers were to go on to build and furnish, created an enthusiasm for regional vernacular house styles that has remained with us ever since, both for the preservation of traditional houses and (with varying degrees of success) in the building of new houses. The Arts and Crafts influence is one of the major reasons why 20th century

English houses look so different to 19th century ones, at every level in the social scale.

This would be enough to justify why Stoneywell is now in the care of the National Trust and open to visitors. However it also helped that it is a characterful and eccentric building, full of functional and beautiful fittings and furniture, surrounded by exceptional gardens developed by Anne and Donald Gimson over the last 40 years, and placed within a wider Leicestershire landscape of woodland and hill-sides. Anne and Donald deliberately retained as much of the original ethos of the cottage as possible – even though they and their children lived all year round in a house originally built for a particularly spartan approach to summer holidays. A test of prospective Gimson brides required them to show their mettle by jumping into the chilly spring-fed 'plunge pool' on the edge of the woods. Equally testing of everybody's energy and resolve must have been the carrying of all water from a pump next to the pool, up the steep hill to the house. Mains water, electricity and a degree of central heating did arrive when the house became a permanent home, but the large assortment of stone hot-water bottles suggests it was still not an easy house to get anything like warm.

The cottage is a testament to an ideal of local living – built from materials to hand, making brilliant use of a site that most builders and architects would dismiss as uninhabitable, with grounds that include a large enclosed vegetable garden, fruit trees, productive woodland and beautiful gardens. It is also perhaps a reminder that such comparatively low impact living, like the fabulous hand-crafted furniture in the house, is both hard work and expensive, and as such ironically remains the preserve of a prosperous minority.

Group Web Site

We have now produced a simple web site at:
www.leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

This will contain latest information about the programme and our newsletters. Please take a look and if you have any suggestions then contact us below or email info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/leicsorganicgroup

The next Newsletter will be produced in December 2015. Articles can be sent to info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

**Leicestershire Organic Group is a joint local group of
The Soil Association and Henry Doubleday Research Association
(Garden Organic)**

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