



## The Threshold Centre

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### Welcome

After the long cold wet winter, how lovely it was to see some days of sunlight, blue skies and the return of the swallows – hopefully with many more such days to come. (I write this as the rain is lashing against the windows again so my fingers are tightly crossed).

In Caroline's memory we held a tree planting ceremony when some of her ashes were spread around three mini fruit trees. Then we gathered in the meditation room for readings and music followed by a shared tea. It was great to welcome members of Caroline's family to be with us for the afternoon. We shall be making a rose garden (using the rest of the ashes) with a beautiful seat near the orchard, as Caroline always envisioned a place for 'quiet contemplation and communion with nature'.

There is much change in the air. We think a buyer has been found for Caroline's Sun Cottage and strange though it will be to have someone else living there, it is something that the family (and we) need to happen.

Richard and Julie are buying a house in Frome, so it will be a sad farewell to them, but then Linda P (and Flash the cat) will be moving into their cottage, and Amanda B (a new resident) taking on Linda's. In the farmhouse Paul has left to go on pilgrimage walkabout in Spain again and Charles (another new resident) has just moved into his old room.

Building work has been taking place recently. The rotten porch seat has been replaced during Tuesday work mornings, by 3 unskilled but enthusiastic residents and is a huge improvement. A new shed has gone up in the community veg garden, and last but certainly not least, one of the 3 attic rooms has been completely rejuvenated (after seemingly endless debate, but that's community for you.) Bill led a team of willing workers in the redecorating and it now is pristine and completely gorgeous.

Gay



### May Fayre Family and Friends' Day

The Sun shone warm and bright for our day – and the village green was decorated with bunting. Visitors came from as far afield as Lancaster and the day started with a group meditation. Then the Brunch team cooked in excess of twenty breakfasts. There followed a chance to play croquet on the green, horseshoe pitching in the garden and children's activities in their tent.

More visitors joined us for afternoon tea, mostly enjoyed outdoors in the sunshine. The finale was dancing around our Maypole in the garden. A big thank you goes to all who helped make it such a successful and fun day.

*Jane, Penny and Stephen*



# The UK CoHousing Network Spring Gathering

Readers of this newsletter may also be aware of the UK CoHousing Network ([www.cohousing.org.uk](http://www.cohousing.org.uk)) The Network has until recently focussed its efforts on offering a website through which forming and operating groups can communicate with one another.

Since March 2012 (thanks to funding from The Tudor Trust) it has employed a project co-ordinator, Jo Gooding, who has started to raise the profile of cohousing much more as well as providing a number of key resources for people starting out on the cohousing trail.

Jo's greatest achievement to date however has been securing Diana Leafe Christian (community living expert and author of "Creating a Life Together") as a keynote speaker and workshop provider for the network's first formal Spring Gathering and AGM.

Having visited Threshold as part of her induction programme Jo approached us and asked if we would be willing to host the event. We said "yes..."

As a result we welcomed 45 people from the UK cohousing world to our home from 17-19 May 2013, the largest number of people we have ever had stay overnight here. Some slept in resident's spare rooms – or their beds if they were away! Others shared the yurt and partly refurbished attic. A few brave souls camped; whilst the remainder stayed at local B&B's and campsites that had hook ups! All joined us for three meals a day which were eaten in a marquee on our green that became a multi functioning room; sometimes workshop space, sometimes dining hall, sometimes dance floor! Thank goodness for the wood burner that came with it!

Despite encouraging alternative transport, at least 20 of the delegates arrived by car – fortunately our neighbours were able to provide us with additional car parking space.

Whilst a core team of 7 of us "held" the event – it would never have happened without the full co-operation of the wider community (in its fullest sense).

Many have commented on the "buzz" that could be felt around the site during the weekend as we connected with our wider family.

Here's hoping the learning from the weekend will benefit the cohousing movement in the UK for years to come.

Amanda



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The courses and work weekends prove very popular, so please book early to avoid disappointment.**

### Friends Weekend

An opportunity to experience cohousing with emphasis on relaxing and having fun, hosted and enjoyed by the Threshold Team.

Cost - £80 plus accommodation at the Threshold Centre/local B&B at £25/35 per night.

**20-22 Sept**

### Cohousing Workshops

The workshop provides an opportunity for individuals or groups to experience life in a cohousing community for a weekend, at the same time learning how to go about setting up a project. The cost of a weekend is £150 including lunch, tea/coffee; evening meals. Accommodation at the Threshold Centre/local B & B is £25/35 per night.

**Nov. 15-17**

### Gardening/Work Weekends

A great opportunity to experience the cohousing lifestyle and to work with us and get to know us. You'll meet interesting like-minded people and have a fun weekend - it's not all work! Arrive in time for Friday supper if you can, otherwise early on Saturday.

**Jul. 19-21 & Oct 18-20**

### Afternoon teas for Visitors and Enquirers

These take place on the first Saturday of each month from 3.00 to 4.30 pm. An informal gathering with a chance to look round and meet the residents. Please let us know if you would like to come, and bring cakes to share. \*Please note there are no Afternoon Teas in August, September or October.

### Open Meditation

The first Thursday of each month from 8.30 to 9.15pm after dinner (optional). We offer meditation and visualisation techniques suitable for all levels of experience. Please let us know if you would like to join us so we know numbers for meals. There is no charge, but donations are welcome.





## The Threshold Garden

What a long, cold winter it was! As everywhere, our garden has been very late this Spring and our raised veg beds looked depressingly empty through March and April.

However, it was all happening in the polytunnel! We decided (largely on the advice of Charles Dowding, Organic Gardener Supremo) to grow as much as we could in the polytunnel before planting out – to avoid the disappearing of small seedlings by the dreaded slugs. So as well as having beds overflowing with salad leaves and spinach throughout the winter, every surface is now crammed with pots and trays of baby veg plants.

And then it got hot! Summer had arrived, and suddenly all our outdoor beds have been mulched and composted, seeds have been sown and plants planted out. Blossom is out everywhere (ooh, the cherry tree by the farmhouse!!), leaves are green and flowers are flowering.....

And then it got cold. Summer had not arrived after all. It is (as I write) mid-May, and who knows what the weather will do next?

Meanwhile we are now the proud owners of both a large garden shed (courtesy of Freecycle) and an elderly ride-on mower (courtesy of a friend of a friend in the village). Both of these items make such a difference to our gardening lives: Linda loves the shed because it holds all the tools and stuff that used to clog up the growing space in the polytunnel, and Andrew loves the mower because he loves driving it!! (And he gets all the mowing done in no time at all!).

Since our last Newsletter, we have held two gardening events. The afore-mentioned Charles Dowding came to give us a day's workshop on No-Dig Organic Gardening and anything else we wanted to know. The day was a great success, very well attended (mostly by Threshold residents and Rozzie's family!) and very inspirational. Practical work included removing our traditional wooden edging from two of our raised beds and mulching both beds and paths, in an experiment to see whether we could reduce the slug population (which live and breed in the wood).

Our March Gardening Weekend was a bit wet and muddy but our visitors were undaunted and much work got done. The biggest achievement was digging out ditches and putting in drainage pipes to take the water away from the polytunnel doorways and the main gateway – there had been ponds there since the rain set in back in the autumn. Thanks to Rozzie and our Spanish visitor, Miguel, for doing all that heavy work.

Late in March the tree nursery were finally able to extract their tree 'whips' from the mud, and we bought another batch of 'air miles hedge' with donations from our travelling residents. This time we bought fruiting trees, such as cherry plum and hawthorn, and planted them along the top of the orchard to complete the shelter belt. Linda

### Next Gardening Weekend

We did not hold a Gardening Weekend in May, due to other commitments, so the next one will be July 19-21.

## Chickens

We now have 4 of the original 6 rescued chickens. Two sadly passed on, but apparently hens rescued from battery farms are not expected to live long. Of the remaining 4, only 3 are laying, but they seem very happy and have been laying throughout the winter, which is a bonus. And the eggs are lovely! We have been letting them roam free range during the day, throughout the orchard, which they love. We know there is a slight risk of daytime foxes, but it's so good to see them pecking about amongst the fruit bushes and making dustbaths. The only problem is, they are so friendly, it's difficult to do any work or have a peaceful moment in the orchard, without the chickens coming to peck at your feet. We are planning to move them, therefore, into a more contained space. We may get more hens and even some ducks to join them....watch this space!

Linda



# The beautiful horses of Cole Street

For 15 months, we were blessed here to live in the presence of a herd of New Forest Ponies. They arrived as they left, and I am going to attempt to give a brief account of what an experience that has been.

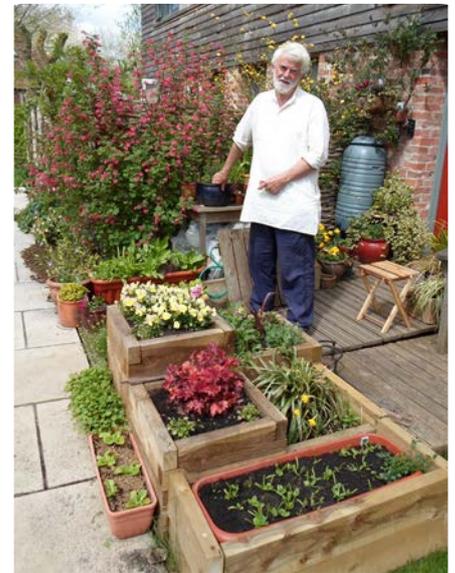
I live in the main farmhouse and am blessed with a most fantastic view over fields and Duncliffe Woods. One morning, out of the blue, I saw five horses, and really didn't know where they came from. In some ways, I didn't need to know, what I instantly knew is that I felt a real connection with them. In time, we all here became aware that they belonged to the farmer who doesn't live here but one hour away. He left them to their own devices, which had the advantage of leaving them free and bonded as a herd. There were at first 5, then 6 and 7. They were very difficult to approach at first and I personally didn't try to force an encounter, trusting that when the time would be right, they would come closer. That time came one day when I felt unwell. Seeing them in the field, I came out with my camera. They were far away from me, and to my great surprise, they all galloped towards me and stopped within a metre. It was the most amazing experience, which was never reproduced again. In their presence, I felt instantly better, and was blessed to see them interacting, playing, resting, being absolutely still, all together, a real meditation!! After that, I could approach them, some would come to interact with me and I learnt so much from just observing them. I think we all did, as we all had our own personal connection.

We are no longer in their presence now but it is a story with a beautiful ending... The farmer wanted to sell them to a trader. I personally couldn't bear the thought of them going away towards a very uncertain destination. I followed my heart, raised the funds to buy them off the farmer. However that wasn't enough since I/we needed to find a place for them to live and people to take care of them. It took a lot of effort but it was amazing. It is a story of people coming together, sharing a vision, of people finding the right words of encouragement at the right time... My family, my friends overseas, in the UK, here at Cole Street, all united. It was a journey testing my trust, and it wasn't easy. During this journey, many things fell apart, people were prepared to have the horses and then didn't, we thought we had found new homes for them and that didn't work out.... Then things started to change in the right direction. Through a connection with a vet, a man rang to say he was a horse whisperer and would be happy to take the whole group!! But there was another challenge to overcome since the horses were going to be auctioned in the New Forest and if we wanted them, we had to go and bid for them, which we did.... and we got them back!! How amazing this felt!!

On the same day, the horses were delivered to their new home in Somerset, where they now live together amongst many other horses.

For me, this is a story of togetherness, of what is possible when we gather and open our hearts. Thank you my friends, and thank you to the horses for the joy they have given us and for their true beauty.

*Muriel*



Michael demonstrates permaculture in action in his garden

**Goodbye to Richard & Julie.**  
**Good luck in your new home - we will miss you so come and visit us LOTS!**

## Keep in touch

To sign up to our mailing list, please email the office at:  
[info@thresholdcentre.org.uk](mailto:info@thresholdcentre.org.uk)

To avoid disappointment, please phone before visiting.

We welcome visitors to our monthly

- Afternoon Tea
- Open Meditations
- Work and Gardening Weekends

and the various courses that are run here.

Please remember that this is also our home and we have busy lives, so turning up hoping to be hosted and shown round could end in disappointment - Thank you.

With best wishes from us all, Jane, Amanda, Peter, Susannah, Bill, Michael, Gay, Andrew, Linda P, Ceri, Tina, Linda D, Julie, Richard, John, Jamie, Rozzie, Stephen, Penny, Charles, Muriel and not forgetting Monty & Elsa our dogs & Flash & Eddy the cats.

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