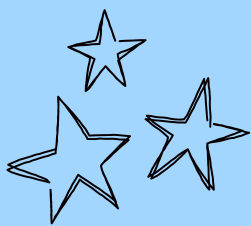


THE KALEIDOSCOPE

The official magazine of The Papillon Project
For schools and their allotments



Spring/Summer 2025



THE PAPILLON PROJECT
Creating & developing
school allotments for
a better future

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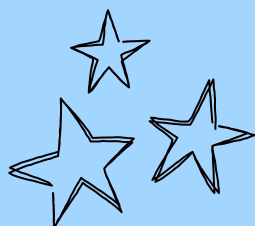
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**Meet The (New)
Team!**

Harriet

Emily

Matt



EDITOR'S *Note*

Hi everyone!



Where my allotment journey began -
at Reepham College!

It's that special time of year again – Kaleidoscope time! I'm delighted to introduce our 2025 spring/summer edition of the Kaleidoscope magazine. As always, this edition is packed full of great material showcasing just how special The Papillon Project is.

The Project would simply not function without the hard work of schools, students and volunteers. I really hope this magazine goes some way to celebrating that hard work. With this in mind, do check out our case study on King's Lynn Academy for an example of an allotment that has achieved an impressive amount in a relatively short space of time!

A feature that holds particular significance for me is our celebration of Reepham Allotment's 10th Anniversary. This was the place where I first got involved with The Papillon Project, so it holds many fond memories. It's truly incredible to see how much the Reepham allotment has developed in 10 years.

The Papillon Project is also undergoing some exciting changes. Check out our interview with new staff member, Emily, and read about our changes to the membership programme.

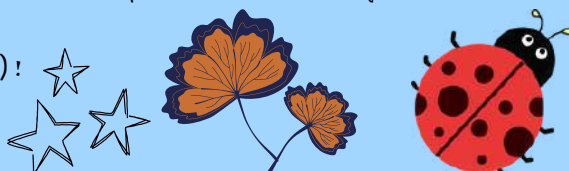
As we approach summer, we have also compiled some useful tips to help make your allotment the best it can be. In our 'Encouraging Nature' section, you can learn how to make your allotment a safe haven for animals. Make sure to also check out our top tips from gardening expert, Frances Tophill.

The Papillon Project's mission is rooted in living more sustainably in order to better look after our planet. We never want to lose sight of the important principles guiding our project, and are therefore so excited to feature one of our celebrated patrons David Holmgren, who has written a fantastic introduction to Permaculture.

We want the Kaleidoscope to be the very best it can be. We would, therefore, love to hear your suggestions for the magazine. What would you like to see? What are the most helpful resources? At the end of the magazine, you will find a link to a feedback form, where you can share your thoughts.

Finally, a huge thanks to all our contributors, especially our amazing founder Matt Willer. Creating the Kaleidoscope is definitely a group effort, and it would not have been possible without you all.

Happy reading (and growing):



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<https://www.thepapillonproject.com/>



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NEWS



Crowdfunding Success

The charity is delighted to announce that we raised over £6000 through the Aviva UK Community Fund crowdfunder. This has completely eclipsed our original target of £2500.

We simply could not have achieved this triumph 🏆 without the generosity of so many kind people and especially so many Aviva UK employees too. We would like to thank everyone who donated so much.

Please [click here](#) learn more about this important crowdfunder and to donate if choose to!

Staff Changes

We give enormous thanks to two highly celebrated members of staff who are moving on to new challenges. Firstly, Poppy (Assistant Schools' Project Lead) who has been completing her horticulture apprenticeship with us since 2022, and won a handful of apprenticeship awards in the process, has now secured a new full-time job with Flora Nova just outside of Fakenham. We are incredibly proud of her and absolutely delighted that she has found post-apprenticeship employment.

Secondly, we also give huge thanks to Graeme (Deputy Schools' Project Lead) for his time with The Papillon Project and all that he has done to enrich our charitable work. We are also very lucky that Graeme will be staying on as a volunteer supporting local projects to where he lives. Graeme moves on to new ventures and new opportunities that just cannot be missed! Good luck Graeme!

We are delighted to welcome Emily Mildren as our new Deputy Schools' Project Lead. Make sure to read our interview with her later in the Kaleidoscope.

Events, Events, Events!!

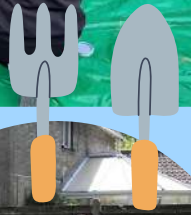
We have an exciting lineup of events planned.

1. Bishop's Garden – June 17. Join us as we celebrate six years of transformative work and spotlight our partnerships with secondary schools across Norfolk.
2. Royal Norfolk Show – June 25–26. For the third consecutive year, we are honoured to be part of this prestigious event, thanks to the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association. We look forward to showcasing our efforts once again.
3. Aylsham Show – August 25. We're thrilled to return to this iconic event and look forward to creating more wonderful memories with the community.

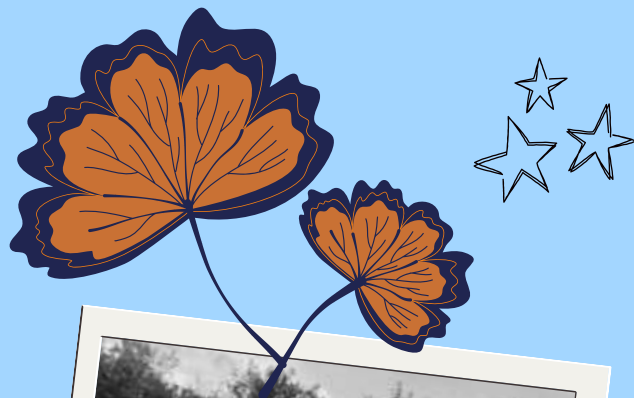


Check out these photos from a range of our fantastic school allotment projects across Norfolk.

We are so proud of all the schools, pupils, volunteers and staff that we work with! Thank you to you all for your incredibly hard work in bringing these allotments alive.



Welcome Emily!!



Can you introduce yourself and your new role?

Hello, I'm Emily and I'm working alongside Matt and Harriet as a Deputy Schools' Project Lead.

What appealed to you most about joining The Papillon Project?

I love the work the charity does, and was very excited to be a part of it! All schools should have allotments!

What have been your highlights of The Papillon Project so far?

At the time of writing I think I've seen eight different projects, and they all have their own character. Getting to know these sites has been really lovely in itself, but even more so seeing how these spaces are used and valued. They seem to mean something different for each student - a quiet escape, a place to make things and let off steam, a social opportunity, somewhere to dig holes and explore...

Is there anything you are particularly looking forward to in your new role?

Right now, I'm really looking forward to seeing all the projects come alive through Spring and Summer. I can't wait to put harvesting on the jobs list, and for students to reap the rewards of their work.

Favourite thing to grow on the allotment?

Probably the humble potato. Last year on my own allotment we harvested enough that we were still eating them this April, and that's even after giving quite a few away! Digging them up always feels a bit like treasure hunting.

What would be your top tip for any young person interested in getting involved in allotment gardening?

My top tip would be to throw yourself in and not worry too much about getting it right. If a gardener tells you they've never made a mistake or accidentally killed a plant, they're lying.

There's no need to know everything - a good month-by-month allotment book and a willingness to google things goes a long way.

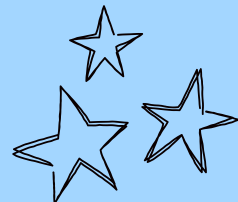


Emily in action alongside some amazing young people!





Membership Programme for Schools



From September 2025, schools and colleges will be required to pay a small monthly subscription to join our Membership Programme which can be renewed or cancelled at the beginning of an academic year. All funds generated from the Membership Programme will go directly to sustaining our charitable work for the future.

For further information, [click here](#) to download an information booklet



WHAT SCHOOLS RECEIVE.....



On the ground support throughout the school year

- Routine physical support with leading and supporting sessions at school allotments
- Routine physical support with project maintenance (i.e. school holiday support)
- Emergency support should a school allotment encounter difficulties
- Promotional support (e.g. assemblies and guided tours for Year 6 intake)
- Recruitment and management of local volunteers



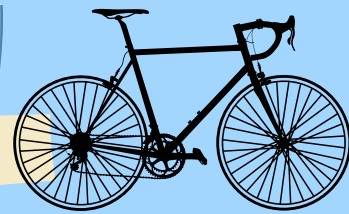
Access to additional enrichment

- Whole year group impact days
- 'Noticing Nature' (nature mindfulness) sessions
- SALT (training) courses for teachers and teaching assistants
- Access to our supportive network 'The Butterfly Effect' that enables schools to connect and cooperate with each other
- 'Cocoon Boxes' and 'Butterfly Boosts' to help get the growing season started and underway
- Support with key resources (e.g. manure, straw, reclaimed wood and other materials than can be upcycled)
- Access to our 'Tool Bank' (repaired and restored second-hand gardening tools for schools)
- Annual 'Young Environmental Stewardship' (YES) awards and certification to celebrate young people



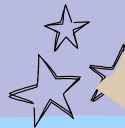


Eco bike!



The Papillon Project has taken to two wheels, and gotten even greener! Staff member Emily is often visiting schools within cycle-able distances, but the necessary tools for her job has meant that hasn't been feasible, until now.

Through a brilliant free scheme by Norfolk County Council, she's been able to borrow an e-cargo bike to travel between projects. With an 180 - 400kg load capacity, e-cargo bikes can do the job perfectly. The scheme looks to reduce consumption of fossil fuels and promote sustainable transport, whilst an increase in business use of cargo bikes could also help with easing congestion and improving air quality in the city. Emily has even been able to charge the bike batteries using energy generated from solar panels she has on her home.



So far, Emily reports that the bike has been a fun experience, and has sparked some great conversations about alternative transport. She's also spent less time sitting in traffic! This is a great step forward in terms of The Papillon Project's commitment to green living and we'd highly recommend the cargo bike scheme to other organisations or businesses operating in Norwich.



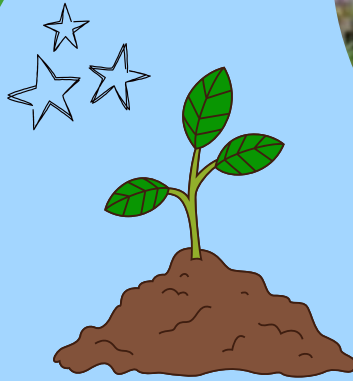
Emily and her bike! We're excited to see where she goes next!



A CHAT WITH *Frances Tophill*



The Kaleidoscope Magazine was very excited to have the chance to chat with Frances Tophill. Frances is a horticulturist and writer who has featured on shows such as Love Your Garden and Gardeners' World!



How would you go about starting a place to grow food?

It all starts with the soil. You need rich and fertile, well drained soil. Organic matter is the best thing to add to help introduce microbes and worms which will work in the long run to improve the soil you have. The only time you shouldn't add organic matter to soil is if it is water logged. But in this dry spring that shouldn't be a problem. Then once you've got a nice patch of ground to grow on, sow seeds that are right for the time of year, water them and feed them regularly and you should have loads of success.

Top gardening tip for spring?

Never get lulled into a false sense of security. It can still be very cold in spring and has been very cold at night recently. So don't rush. By the end of May everything should be safe to put outside and you still have many months of growing left. Don't be tempted to do everything early.

Why do you think that gardening is good for our mental well-being?

It teaches us patience, connects us to outside and the natural world, reminds us that however we may be feeling there is a big world out there and our problems are never as big as we think they are. And finally it teaches us to have lots of things to look forward to. When we garden now it's always about how things will look and feel and taste in the future. So it gives us hope for the future.



What would be your favourite vegetables to grow at this time of year?

I love squashes. They get so big in just one year and you can store them for months and months. And they are delicious. So I always grow them at this time of year.



Why is gardening, and learning to grow food, important to helping, in perhaps a small way, to prevent climate change?

If we grow our own food, it means we buy less. That means fewer ship and air miles, fewer chemicals that have been sprayed on our food and fewer damaged eco systems wherever our bought food has been grown. It means less plastic packaging too, as well as less fuel to drive to and from the supermarket. It also means we can improve the land we work on by introducing food compost, healthy soil and biodiversity that improves in a beneficial spiral providing for more and more creatures. The more environmentally considerate methods we use, like waste water capture, sustainable drains, using plants to filter flood water and provide shelter for creatures, as well as building insect and mammal habitat into our structures like walls and fences, adds even more, to the beneficial elements of gardening and growing.





Cocoon Boxes

Harriet gives us the low-down on this great resource provided by the project to schools!



For a number of years now, The Papillon Project has been providing cocoon boxes to give schools a little boost to the start of their growing season. Fitting with our general ethos of reusing and recycling, the cocoon boxes contain a collection of donated seeds and plants along with seedlings we have raised ourselves. The flower pots are donated to us and the boxes housing everything come from local supermarkets. The timing varies as we have to negotiate Easter as well as attempting to time the sowing and growing of plants so they are not too big, not too small and hardened off!



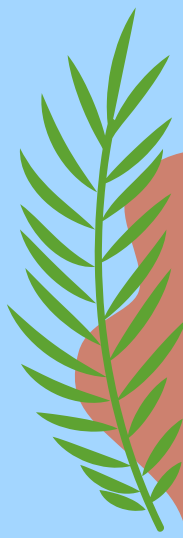
Each year the contents are a little different depending on the time of year and the donations we have received. This year, plants we have grown include tomatoes, leeks, broad beans & annual flowers. We also have climbing bean seeds saved from Long Stratton High School allotment (thank you LSHS!) and Chocolate Mint from cuttings taken at Wymondham High School allotment (thank you WHS!)



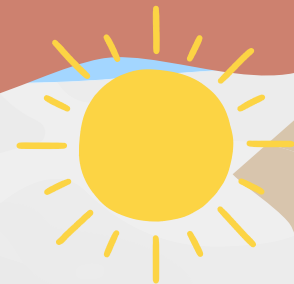
Photos of plants for the cocoon boxes being grown, and the boxes being prepared.



Summer Cooking



It's very important to make the most of the wonderful produce you grow on your allotments. This recipe is by Tom Kerridge and is taken from BBC Good Food (Recipe from Good Food magazine, June 2020).



Allotment Salad

8 asparagus spears (halved)
250g green beans (halved)
250g long-stem broccoli (chopped into 2cm lengths)
200g peas (fresh or frozen)
8 radishes (sliced)
1 pointed cabbage (shredded)
4 spring onions (sliced)
handful of mint (leaves, chopped)

For the dressing

4 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 lemon (juiced)

Recipe Tips

The next day: chill any leftover salad and dress just before serving. Make this salad with any veg you have or can easily get. Don't skip the iced water step, either - this helps keep the veg vibrant and green.

- To make the dressing, combine all the ingredients in a bowl and season well.
- Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and fill a bowl with iced water. Cook the asparagus for 2 mins, then transfer to the iced water with a slotted spoon. Cook the beans for 4 mins and repeat, then do the same with the broccoli (cook for 2½ mins) and peas (cook for 1 min). Drain and pat dry with kitchen paper.
- Tip into a bowl with the radishes, cabbage, spring onions and mint. Serve the dressing on the side.





10 years of Reephram Allotment!



Reephram High School and College's allotment has been running for 10 years. This allotment led to the creation of The Papillon Project, so this is a very important anniversary!! In honour of this anniversary, we spoke to volunteers past and present!

Louis Johnson

I feel incredibly fortunate to have been a part of the project at Reephram for all these years. I joined as a sixth-form student in my teens and, now in my late twenties, I have so many cherished memories at the allotment. I've spent time relaxing with friends, performing at the first 'Live at the Allotment', collaborating on building projects, exploring my filmmaking talent and enjoying some good-old DIY. This project has inspired and informed as it has evolved and transformed over the years. It's been such a wonderful pleasure and a deep source of wisdom and efficacy, through all I've taken part in and everyone I've worked with.'



The picture below is from a weekend session in the pouring rain (10/02/2019), moving telegraph poles and sleepers (for the foundations of the eco building) from the car park down to the allotment. One of my fondest (and most exhausting!) memories from my time there.

It's Tom Fox, myself (Louis), Matt and Robert Webb (left to right).



The allotment in its early days. A lot has changed since!



Reephram Allotment this spring!



10 years of Reepham Allotment!

Tammy Digby

I support an ASDAN Personal Development Programmes called Care of the Countryside which we offer at Reepham High School to students aged 14 to 16. The course offers imaginative ways of developing, recording and certificating a wide range of young people's personal qualities, abilities and achievements. As well as introducing them to new activities and challenges. The students will complete several modules based around Communication, Community, Independent living, Environment and World of Work etc. These will develop a range of key skills including teamwork, learning and coping with problems. These key skills will offer students the chance to work as part of a team, learn something new or improve on current understanding and build on their personal qualities. They will also enable pupils to recognise problems and find methods and solutions to solve them. Over the past year the students have completed many interesting projects within the school allotment, they have re-lined the wildlife pond as well as restructuring the pond by making a pebble beach area and making more habitat areas within and around the pond to encourage more wildlife. They have also taken on the mammoth task of clearing an area and laid bark, as well as repairing donated benches to make an area to reflect and take a well-deserved rest break after working within the allotment.



Photos from the
Care of the
Countryside project
at Reepham



Kate Lee

Our school allotment is one of the most enjoyable places to be in the world! It is certainly 'our' allotment. The young people who visit the allotment are able to feel calm and valued as soon as they arrive. Everyone who visits the allotment comes back more than once. They add to its value, whether they are weeding, walking, eating, building, sowing, drawing, resting or fixing. The sounds, smells and colours at our allotment are completely different from the rest of our school. You cannot hear the school bell but time seems to slow down here, even though we always have far too many jobs planned each time we visit! Students enjoy the freedom from the classroom when they visit the allotment as part of lessons or during their own lunchtime and learn new growing and problem solving skills to take home with them. They learn how to reuse and upcycle unwanted materials. For example, the rope pump, made from old rope, guttering, a tyre and pallets. Our only source of water. I cannot imagine our school without its allotment. It is a part of my everyday school life and has been for 10 years. We hope to continue making it available to every young person at the school for decades to come!





Tool Bank

We believe using second-hand tools sets a good example for young people. This is because restoring and repairing tools is an important life skill, an excellent example of sustainability and better for the environment too!

Using second-hand tools also means new tools don't have to be bought and, in our experience, vintage tools often last longer than brand-new modern tools!

We are always in need of more second-hand tools to aid our charitable work. If you would like to make a tool donation or if you are interested in volunteering to help us repair tools, please email us at info@thepapillonproject.com

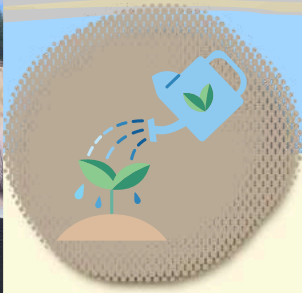
Schools can make requests from our Toolbank via our [online form](#).

Our volunteers meet, when they can, to restore and repair tools donated to us.

Some of these restored tools are then donated to our charity's shop to help us raise funds, but the more suitable and sought-after tools are donated directly to secondary schools. We ask schools to look after these tools and to let us know if they need to come back to the charity for repair.

All our tools that are successfully repaired/restored are given a tag and are catalogued so we know which tool(s) go to which school. Schools can then return them to our 'Tool Bank' if they are in need of further repair.

SALT courses



A big part of The Papillon Project is ensuring that we pass on the knowledge and expertise of our amazing staff to our amazing schools! One way we do this is through SALT courses. SALT stands for School Allotment Leadership Training. These courses are free and are designed to provide teachers, teaching assistants and youth workers with the skills and knowledge to lead a school allotment/garden at secondary school. These courses are great opportunities for individuals and the charity to share ideas, recommendations and experience, with lots of positive energy too!! Each course takes place after school and usually lasts for about two and a half hours.



This year, our SALT course at Caister Academy was well attended by teaching staff from the school and other local schools too. There was a very positive atmosphere, great camaraderie and lots of sharing of ideas and best practice too! We aim to put a virtual SALT course on come autumn/winter time for teachers in and outside of Norfolk.



Photos from our recent SALT course at Caister Academy. Thank you so much to everyone who attended!

A GUIDE TO PERMACULTURE



By David Holmgren



In 1978, David Holmgren co-originated the permaculture concept in *Permaculture One*, co-authored with Bill Mollison. David is globally recognised as a leading ecological thinker, teacher, writer and speaker promoting permaculture as a realistic, attractive and powerful alternative to dependent consumerism.



Our celebrated patron David Holmgren in the garden with his partner Sue.

Popularly seen as a 'cool' form of organic gardening, permaculture could be better described as a design system for resilient living and land use, based on universal ethics and ecological design principles. Although the primary focus of permaculture has been to redesign gardening, farming, animal husbandry and forestry, the same ethics and principles apply to the design of buildings, tools and technology.



Applying permaculture ethics and principles in our gardens and homes inevitably leads us towards redesigning our ways of living so as to be more in tune with local surpluses and the limits of where we live. For example, if I live near a large forest, it makes sense that I heat my home using wood energy. If I live near the ocean, I will eat more fish and use seaweed to help fertilise my garden, whereas if I live inland and keep goats and chickens, I will collect their manure to help fertilise my soils instead.

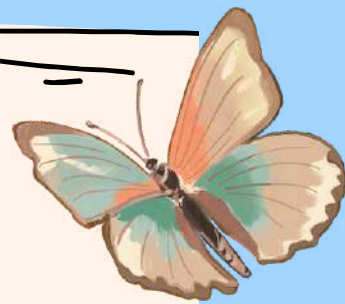
Permaculture is also a global movement of individuals, groups and networks working to create the world we want, by providing for our needs and organising our lives in harmony with nature. The movement is active in the most privileged and the most destitute communities and countries, from schools to refugee camps, from large acre farms to apartments with small balconies.

Permaculture may be Australia's most significant export for humanity facing a world of limits, and abundant possibilities.





The Butterfly Effect



The Butterfly Effect is the name of our school allotment network/support group here in Norfolk. We want to bring schools and colleges together to spread inspiration and enthusiasm.



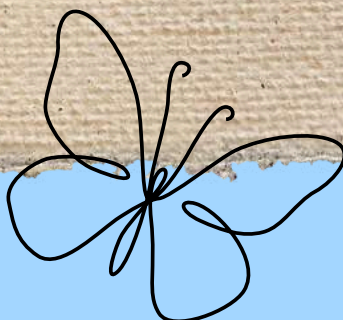
The name of the network is inspired by the idea that one little change can create a ripple effect and help to create a bigger change. In practice, this is the idea that a butterfly flapping its wings to take off, can create a knock-on effect, and end up creating a typhoon. One butterfly flapping its wings could not cause a typhoon, but lots of little changes can have a big impact.

If a school donates some seeds to another school, this seemingly small action will have a significant and positive impact on the other school.



THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

- We want to encourage schools to connect with each other in multiple ways (via email, visiting each others' projects and sharing ideas and good practice). School gardening is hard work and connecting like-minded teachers together helps to generate positive energy, which makes projects seem more doable and possible. The charity wants to act as a 'telephone exchange', helping to facilitate connections.
- Sharing resources and equipment: some schools sometimes have surplus tools and garden materials (e.g. compost, manure, seeds and plants) whereas some schools have little. We feel showing cooperation between schools gives young people a good example of cooperation.





A Case Study: **KING'S LYNN ACADEMY ALLOTMENT**



I am currently the main member of staff working on the allotment and have been working on it from its beginning four years ago. From what started as a modest patch of land has become a productive space in nature. This season we have been growing a variety of vegetables including squash, potatoes and a variety of peas which have thrived in the sunny weather. The allotment has become more than just a space to grow fruit and vegetables; it's a space where students connect with nature and can enjoy a sense of calm outside of the classroom and we can't wait for next year to see what it brings us (although hopefully less slugs!)

Carol Reeve - Staff, King's Lynn Academy



All of the school allotments we work with are incredible and deserve recognition. In this issue we wanted to celebrate the work of volunteers at King's Lynn Academy, one of our newer projects!



It's been a pleasure and a privilege to work on the allotment with the students and staff of KLA and of course Matt Willer. The children gain so much from just being outside and working together and by getting an understanding of what is involved in planting, protecting, weeding, watering and picking the plants. There are downs as well as ups in growing vegetables and fruit but coping with things like last year's slug invasion or this year's drought is valuable experience. Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this exciting project.

Richard High - Rotary Club of King's Lynn



A Case Study: **KING'S LYNN ACADEMY ALLOTMENT**



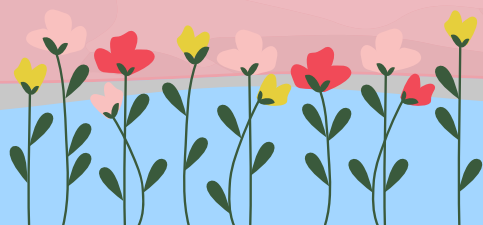
I was fortunately taught the fundamentals of gardening by my parents. This was at a time when much of what we ate, we grew ourselves. Times have changed and not every young person has this opportunity. Papillon has filled this gap. Matt, the staff and the students have managed to make use of a piece of derelict land at the KLA that still had builders rubble buried, and this has helped to show the students what can be achieved. Students have learnt to understand some of the ups and downs of nature and the 'culprits' of the insect world that wish to share their vegetables! It really has been a privilege to be able to help, something I am passionate about as many young people may not be aware of where their food comes from and the difficulties that farmers may face in providing this for them.

Bob Angell - Rotary Club of King's Lynn



I am part of Priory Rotary Club. I am on the Environmental Group. Richard mentioned that we have The Papillon Project at the School and needed volunteers. I joined the group and helped over last 3 years. I am farmer's daughter and over 20 years been part of South Wootton in Bloom. It's such a joy to be part of the project and help, support young children who are enthusiastic and eager to learn and be part of the allotment. They get so much from growing vegetables/herbs/berries. Being outdoors, gaining confidence and know where the organic food comes from.

Bharti Patel - Rotary King's Lynn Priory



I am the link teacher for The Papillon Project and work closely with other staff, students and volunteers. As I am a senior teacher, I have almost no time to work on the allotment during the term, however as I live locally, and now have no garden, I tend to enjoy watering the allotment during the holidays. It has been a pleasure to see the vegetables and flowers growing through the summer, and to see the students enjoy the space. At some point in my future, I can see my own allotment, maybe when I am less busy.

Matt Docking - Staff, King's Lynn Academy



THE LORE AND LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN: THE VEGETABLE CONNECTION

Tom Greenwood

Thomas joined The Papillon Project as a Trustee at the beginning of 2023. Thomas loves spending time at his allotment in Norwich. His wide educational experience aids the strategical planning of the charity's charitable work.



Recently my youngest daughter, aged five, came home and repeated a playground rhyme I remembered well from my own childhood,

'First the worst,
Second the best,
Third the one with the hairy chest.
Fourth the golden eagle.'

Intrigued as to where the rhyme came from, and for how long it had been in use, I fetched my copy of *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* by Iona and Peter Opie. Published in 1959, the work is a wonderful collection of sayings, games, rhymes and riddles collected over ten years, during numerous visits to schools and communities across the country. Sadly, I could not find the rhyme, but I did revisit a book which treated the 'thriving unselfconscious culture' of children with the respect it deserves.

One of the themes of the work is the extent to which cultural transmission amongst children is, in some respects, stronger than amongst adults. Tricks, riddles and rebukes often dating back hundreds of years were still in common use, enriched with a multitude of regional variations.

As I skimmed happily through the pages I wondered if gardening or allotments would get any mention? Alas not, but fruit and vegetables certainly did. So in this article I have collected together many of the references to the *products* of allotments, as used in the language and lore of schoolchildren over fifty years ago.

Halloween was not always Pumpkin based for it was the apple that held sway in the North and West. In Liverpool Halloween was called, 'Duck Apple Night', Newcastle 'Dookie-Apple Night', Swansea 'Apple and Candle Night' and in Pontypool 'Bob Apple Night'. So strong was the apple theme that one 11 year old girl in Griffithstown said, "some people call Crab-apple Night Halloween".

Games played on the night were, unsurprisingly, apple based and included Duck Apple, Forking for Apples, Bob Apple, Apple on the line, Apple and Candle and Apple on the Mound.

It could also prove a good occasion to foretell the future, in Aberdeen, 'each girl peels an apple, the peel must be in one piece, then she throws the peel over her left shoulder with her right hand. This is supposed to show the initial of her husband to be'.

All Souls day is not much a feature in the lives of children today. However, in the 1940s and 50s children and teenagers in Cheshire and Staffordshire still went singing songs for 'soul-cakes':

'Soul! Soul! Soul for a soul-cake!
I pray you, good missis, a soul-cake!
An apple, a pear, a plum or a cherry,
Or any good thing to make us merry.
One for Peter, two for Paul,
Three for Them that made us all.'

'Soul, Soul for an apple or two,
If you've got no apples pears will do:
If got no pears ha'pennies will do,
If you've got no ha'pennies God bless you.'

Mischief Night on the 4th November was popular coast to coast across northern England and included behaviour, that if carried out today, would feature in news stories of societal breakdown and wild youth lawlessness. The mischief was frequently criminal, with gates removed, windows daubed with paint, doorknobs tied 'sneck to sneck', house numbers exchanged, drainpipes stuffed with paper and set alight and fireworks pushed through letterboxes - all part of a tradition of 'happy warfare with the adult world.' Vegetables do get a look in amongst the mayhem, with some children reporting that whilst one child climbs a roof with a bucket of water, the other knocks at the door selling cabbages, if the resident does not buy they get 'wet through'.

Guy Fawkes Night was firework focused, terrifyingly so from a modern perspective, but children did report that they, 'put potatoes on sticks and cook them in the burning embers.'

Christmas was, and is, a time of feasting. Fruit and vegetables get plenty of mentions in children's carolling:

'Slip down the cellar and see what you find me,
An apple or a pear or a good strong beer,
And we'll never come a-carolling till thus time next year.'





THE LORE AND LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN: THE VEGETABLE CONNECTION



North Staffordshire, reported by a 14 year old girl

*'Now Christmas is here
Let's have a drop of beer
Bright celery, bright celery,
And a happy New Year.
Apples to eat, nuts to crack
Here we come with our rat-tat-tat.'*

Dudley, Worcestershire

St Valentine's Day was a time of gift giving, in some places more so than at Christmas. The celebration was particularly strong in parts of Norfolk, with 'Jack Valentine' leaving presents on doorsteps. A popular message in a card was,

*'My love is like a cabbage
Divided into two,
The leaves I give to others
But the heart I give to you.'*

Punkie Night featured root vegetables in a major way. In Somerset punkies were lanterns made of intricately carved mangel-wurzel's,

*'It's punkie night tonight,
Its punkie night tonight,
Adam and Eve wouldn't believe,
It's Punkie Night tonight.'*

Vegetables occasionally appear in children's lore as a method of self-medication, onion juice rubbed onto the hand worked after a canning!

Insults regularly featured vegetables:

*'You're daft, you're potty, you're barmy,
You ought to join the army.
You got knocked out
With a Brussel sprout
You're daft, you're potty you're barmy.'*

Market Rasen

*'Telly-pie tit
Sat upon a wall
Eating raw cabbages
And letting bits fall.'*

Cumberland

*'Hide-and-go-seek,
Yer mothers a leek,
Yer fathers a cabbage,
And yor a wee sneak.'*

Glasgow

Children and young people have lost much of this language and lore over the last fifty years. Perhaps that is not such a negative thing, there is a striking and sometimes real cruelty in much of what Iona and Peter Opie recorded.

However, reading through this wonderful work one of the things which stands out is the connection to animals, food and the natural world absent to too many of our young people today. A world cut away from many young people, not just by the physical barriers to accessing it, but by verbal barriers to describing and understanding it.

Perhaps school allotments are a way forward, a way to reintroduce some of the best language and lore of nature and food production to young people today; or to introduce new ways of looking, experiencing and *feeling* the world around them. In the constantly evolving culture of children and young people I for one look forward to a time when, once again, the ardent love of a teenager can best be expressed as being, 'like a cabbage'.



Make sure to come back for our Winter edition where we should have another great article by Thomas!



Encouraging Nature

A huge thank you to Holly Chantrill-Cheyette for creating these excellent tips for making your allotment a place for nature.

After a cold, damp Winter the soil is slowly warming up, tempting nestled seeds to unfurl and soak up the Spring sun. Spring is the perfect time to notice the natural world waking up and nurture nature in your allotment! Creating havens for nature (and each other) is needed now more than ever and there are so many ways to encourage nature in your allotment. We hope this helps you to nurture and notice nature, we can't wait to see what wildlife you welcome to your allotments this Spring and Summer!



- Reduce how often you dig or turn your soil
 - 'No dig' techniques are much easier for your body, but are also beneficial for soil health by reducing disturbance to the soil
 - You can layer 'organic matter' (such as leaves, homemade compost, cardboard) in your veg patch instead of digging
 - You can of course dig out weeds (a plant in the wrong place)



● Have a go at companion planting

- This is where you grow plants together that benefit each other, enhance soil health, attract pollinators, and reduce any need for pesticides
- For example, grow French marigolds and calendula with tomatoes to attract pollinators that control creatures that may want to eat your tomatoes!
- Or grow nasturtium with brassicas to 'distract' cabbage white butterflies from your cabbage, broccoli and kale!

● Grow plants for pollinators and birds

- Try to focus on native plants instead of invasive species
- Species to try include native wildflowers, calendula, lavender, pulmonaria, comfrey, English bluebells, buddleia, nepeta, foxgloves, red valerian, ivy, verbena, echinacea, teasel and many more!
- Pollinators absolutely love it if you let herbs like coriander, sage, marjoram and oregano flower!
- You could make a 'moon meadow' for moths using honeysuckle, jasmine, marjoram, comfrey, heather, mint and varrow



● Create a water source for aquatic wildlife, insects and birds

- Dig a pond and fill it with collected rainwater
- Create a mini pond using an old sink or container
- Add oxygenating pond plants and include some flowering plants too

● Experiment with planting heights

- You can mow your grass to different heights and let some grass grow wild to create varied habitats for wildlife
- Growing ground cover plants underneath taller plants can protect and nourish your soil, making it healthier for all living things connected to it!
- You can create paths through meadows and longer grass and create signs to make sure people don't trample plants

● Grow green manures in your veg patch or raised beds

- These are plants that add nutrients to your soil in a similar way to manure, but also provide habitat and food for pollinators
- Species you could try are red clover, white clover and phacelia
- After you've sown, grown and mown your green manures, you can plant 'hungry' crops like squashes or brassicas

● Plant trees and hedgerows

- Trees and hedgerows provide essential habitats and food for wildlife
- Trees and hedgerows also create connections between habitats so help wildlife to travel between different places
- Species you can try include hawthorn, rowan, oak, hazel, willow and apple
- Oak trees support over 2,300 species!



● Don't use chemicals or pesticides!



Thank you for reading!!



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