

## DIARY DATES

Sat 9 June 2007

### **Ryton Organic Garden excursion**

An afternoon trip to the former Henry Double Day Research Centre near Coventry (see back page for more info)

Sat 23 June 2007

### **Annual CSA BBQ**

Gill Lawson will be hosting the annual event. Bring your own booze and bangers and we'll provide the salads

Mon 24 Sept 2007

### **Monthly lecture**

The 2007/8 lectures season resumes at Reaseheath. Topics may include:

**Sheep dogs  
Scanning  
Regulations and legislation  
HSE  
Vet slot  
Horses  
Beekeeping  
Birds of prey  
Goat keeping  
Agricultural machinery**

Doors open 7.30 for 8pm start. Entry £2.. Noticeboard. Tea and coffee available.

Room L3  
The Leverhulme Centre  
Reaseheath College  
Nantwich  
Cheshire CW5 6DF



## Health and Safety Day

### **Chair Kevin Holmes on the merits of attending a recent presentation day covering HSE matters**

The Health and Safety Executive recently held a farming safety day, which you may have seen reported in the daily papers following the accident that happened to one of the attendees when she tripped over an open drain. The day was also controversial following the wording of the invite which implied that if farmers did not attend they were more likely to have an HSE inspection. This matter was raised by Mr Whalley, of Crocky trail fame, and supported by the majority of the attendees.

The day went through a number of activities that are frequently undertaken by most of us: Working on roofs, working at height, manual lifting, mechanical handlers, quad bikes and Power Take Offs. The safety aspects of each of these activities were covered and thought provoking comments on the ease with which accidents happen. The presentations were all very professional and were given by people who did the job on a daily basis including farmers and firemen. While I cannot say I learnt a lot, I like to think I am already safety aware, I did learn a number of things I can be doing in a safer way and it has improved my approach to safety, which I had thought was good to start with. Listening to the descriptions given by other attendees of the accidents that had happened to them they usually started: "I only ...". The outcome of these simple accidents included up to six months off work, fortunately none were as bad as the descriptions of simple accidents given by the inspectors, many of which were fatal!

On the subject of the unfortunate accident on the day: given the number of HSE inspectors who had inspected the site and who had thought that the open drain near a doorway posed no risk, due to its proximity to a wall, what chance do we stand of identifying the risks around our premises.

*continued on page 7*

# Traditional pig keeping and going organic

## Lecture update from March and April

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### **Traditional Pig Keeping (March)**

Wendy Scudamore made the trip from Herefordshire to talk about pig keeping. Wendy breeds Kuni Kuni pigs and has a wide variety of experience in keeping a variety of pigs.

Covering a wide range of topics including feeding, breeding, showing, housing, fencing and the ever increasing legislation her lecture was very informative with the obvious benefit of considerable experience.

Even the experienced pig keepers learnt something and all enjoyed her talk.

For more information visit:  
[www.bartonhill.co.uk](http://www.bartonhill.co.uk)

### **Organic gardening (April)**

Derrick Jones gave a very informative talk on how to grow organically on both a small and large scale as well as some of the best varieties to use. His tips included:

- digging beds at night to reduce weed growth (try it, it does work)
- plant marigolds for whitefly control
- use New Zealand boxes for composting
- apply walnut leaves as a weed killer.

He gave much good advice, some interesting recipes for natural pest control and I am sure it gave all attending some new ideas on growing veg.

## **How to Rear a Happy Pig**

*William Cobbett, 1763 – 1835*

The cottager's pig must be bought at an age when he will eat anything that an old hog will eat. He will graze on the skirts of forests or commons and eat cabbage leaves – almost to stumps. Swedish turnip tops and mangle worzels will keep him in good order.

And there must be more; give your lean hog fifteen bushels of malt and he will repay you in ten score of bacon. If you try to feed hi on tea messes he will be dead with hunger and will bequeath you his skeleton at the end of seven days.

Make him happy and fat. If he can walk two hundred yards at a time he is not well fatted. He will give you two flitches of bacon worth fifty Methodist sermons, for sight of them keeps a man from poaching and stealing softens the temper and promotes domestic harmony.

The pig is great blessing.

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## **MEMBER'S SALES AND WANTED ADVERTS**

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### **Sheep shears**

Unit almost new but head/blades older.  
VGC. No sensible offer around £150 refused!

tel: Dean 01829 250232

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### **Boot liner (rigid and high sided)**

Fits into Volvo 700/900/V90 series estates (1985 to 99) perfectly. VGC. £50. Also backlight unit for Volvo 940 estate (new in box) £30.

Buyers collect  
Wem or Tattenhall.

tel: Stella 01948 710302



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### **Ad placement is free for members**

email: [stella@thistlestop.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:stella@thistlestop.fsnet.co.uk)  
tel: Stella 01948 710302

## Health and Safety Day continued from page 1

On the subject of the unfortunate accident on the day: given the number of HSE inspectors who had inspected the site and who had thought that the open drain near a doorway posed no risk, due to its proximity to a wall, what chance do we stand of identifying the risks around our premises. The accident to the woman appeared to occur as a crowd of people went through the door and the drain was not spotted by the woman who put her foot down it. The result was torn ligaments and a bad back requiring time off during lambing. First aiders were on hand to help, although their attendance appeared to be overkill when we were first told they were on site.

Following the presentations I can confidently say that I will be thinking about safety far more and modifying my work practice. I have already replaced the PTO shaft safety cover on the topper and no longer will I be reaching for that final inch, with one foot

outstretched to balance me, when working up a ladder.

The problem we have in making our activities safer is that we cannot prove that working safer has stopped an accident. The HSE manager refused to apologise for the wording of the invite as his view was that if it persuaded someone to attend who then managed to avoid a serious accident then it was worth it. But no one will ever know if an accident has been avoided apart from the rather crude measure of a reduction in reportable accidents and we all know that not all accidents are reported. The attendees I talked to afterwards all said they believed that attendance has been worthwhile.

So was it worth attending?	Yes
Will I work safer as a result?	Yes
Should you attend if you get the opportunity?	Yes

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# CSA SHOW TIME 2007 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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Tony Moore (tel: **01925 730530**) is coordinating CSA representation at shows across the county this summer. We need your help to man the stand and recruit new members at the following shows:

## Arley Country Fair

Sat 26 and Sun 27th May

Gill and Tony Moore, Kevin and Margaret Holmes have offered to man the stand on the Sun. Four others (2 for morning, 2 for afternoon) needed for the Saturday. Entry tickets will be provided.



## Cheshire Show

Tues 19th and Wed 20th June.

Gill & Tony Moore will do Tues (either am or pm) but six others needed to cover the three other 1/2 day sessions. Subsidised entry will be provided but tickets need to be bought early to attract discount.



## Nantwich Show

Wed 25th July

Volunteers needed morning and afternoon.



## Chelford Rare Breeds Show & Sale

Sat 22nd Sept

Volunteers needed morning and afternoon.



## Cheshire Ploughing Match, to be held near Chester

Wed 26th Sept

Volunteers needed morning and afternoon. on the stand being hosted by FWAG.



# Building a polytunnel

Kevin and Margaret Holmes decided this year to make a sustained effort to grow some decent veg instead of the prize nettles they normally manage to produce on the veg plot. Here Kevin takes us through part one of the experience.

To grow more veg we needed a larger green house on a different site, and after researching the pros and cons of glass and polythene, mainly due to the cost we ordered a 10' by 15' polutunnel. Another advantage (according to the blurb) was that it could be erected by two people in two days.

Four weeks later we are now ready to put the cover on. It has taken longer than expected, despite the good instructions, due partly to other distractions and partly due to the time it takes to check that you are putting it together correctly. If I ever do another one I am sure it will be a bit quicker.

The tunnel came in 13 parcels from First Tunnels. It was ordered via the web with no difficulties and delivered when promised. All the different components were in labelled bags and there were a lot of them, the delivery note had over 50 lines on it. They also included a tea bag as the first step was to have a cup of tea and read the instructions. (A thoughtful touch)

We decided on a timber base to tension the cover rather than a trench to hold the polythene down. This requires holes to be dug so that the base tubes (in the ground) can have plates attached under the ground to stop the tunnel blowing away. Setting out the site to get the location of the base tubes correct and level was the first challenge and probably the most important one.

The rest of the construction was like a giant meccano set but despite reasonable instructions it was not always obvious how it should go together. I am sure I am partially to blame as I am not very good at following instructions. The incorporation a double door and the timber base frame complicated the construction slightly. If doing it again I would be tempted to dig the trench for the cover or to go for the aluminium base frame, although it is more expensive.

I will let you know how I get on with putting the cover on in the next episode.

For more information on growing your own visit: [www.rhs.org.uk/vegetables/](http://www.rhs.org.uk/vegetables/)



Kevin's polytunnel mid build: note the chair already installed!

# Training update

The **traditional pig keeping** course ran on 6th May at Home Farm, Tatton Park. I had no luck in organising **lambing** or **shearing** courses exclusively for CSA members, as Reaseheath College have problems finding lecturers willing to work on a Saturday. However, those who had expressed an interest were directed towards the public courses that the college now advertises.

Mike and Maggie Taylor have organised a **lamb butchery** course to run in June and Nicky Town will be contacting people shortly about the **soap making** course.

Reaseheath now run public courses on various aspects of **animal husbandry**, **tractor driving** and **vegetable growing**. Most of these run on a weekday for half a day and cost £45. The enclosed flyer lists current Reaseheath courses but updates are always available on their website, [www.reaseheath.ac.uk](http://www.reaseheath.ac.uk) or you can ring Angela Boon on 01270 613271 for details.

If you are interested in any of the courses listed in The Gate, please fill in the form and send it to me.



We welcome suggestions for courses, and any leads for tutors and suitable venues. Please see enclosed flyer listing current Reaseheath courses.

**Beth Jones**

## TRAINING EVENT APPLICATION FORM

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
Evening tel no	<input type="text"/>
Course(s) of interest	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Return to: Beth Jones • The Woodlands • Whitchurch Road • Burleydam • Whitchurch • Shropshire SY13 4AX  
tel: 01948 871641 • email: [beth.eajones@googlemail.com](mailto:beth.eajones@googlemail.com)

# Course list

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## Alpacca keeping

A course to address the practical aspects of buying, rearing, clipping and breeding

## Bed & Breakfast

A guide to opening your home to paying guests covering the practicalities and legalities plus promotion of your business

## Beekeeping

An introduction to all things apian: from choosing the hive to harvesting the honey

## Chainsaw use and safety

The essential introduction to safe chainsaw handling at reasonable cost

## Dairy products

An introduction to making the most of your excess milk production including soft cheese, yoghurt, ice-cream and butter production

## Goatkeeping and management

Everything you need to know about buying, keeping and breeding goats, including handling and milking

## Hurdlemaking

Beautiful and functional, traditional hazel hurdlemaking from scratch for smallholding or garden

## Introduction to poultry

Practical advice on breeds and systems for your own egg and table poultry production

## Lamb butchery

Turn your carcase into professionally presented joints with this hands-on introduction

## Lambing

Lambing skills and techniques for beginners and more experienced sheep owners

## Sheep shearing

Top to tail techniques for a clean sheep shave!

## Sheep tasks

Everything and more you wanted to know about the practicalities of keeping sheep



## Showing cattle

A practical introduction in the art of preparing stock for the show ring

## Showing sheep

A practical introduction in the art of preparing stock for the show ring

## Soap making

Turn oils and fats into deliciously fragranced designer soaps using traditional techniques

## Traditional pig keeping

All you need to know about buying, keeping and breeding pigs including rearing your first weaners

# Ryton Organic Garden excursion, Sat 9 June

Garden Organic is the working name of the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA). A registered charity, and Europe's largest organic membership organisation, they are dedicated to researching and promoting organic gardening, farming and food.

The CSA last visited the garden 10 years ago so we thought it about time we planned another trip.

We have arranged a tour of the gardens for the after-noon at a cost of £5.50/head. This includes the cost of admission and the guided tour, which last about an hour and a half.

There is an excellent restaurant and coffee shop with the wonderful gift shop.

Members are very welcome to bring guests but we need to know total numbers as soon as possible.



**contact:** Jane Hulse to book your place.  
**tel:** 01829 781343 (after 6.pm)  
**email:** Jane.Hulse@i7services.co.uk or Jane.Hulse@Cheshire.gov.uk

For more information visit:  
[www.gardenorganic.org.uk/gardens/ryton.php](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/gardens/ryton.php)

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