

THE TRUSTY TRACTOR

Dec 2011

2011 – it was the year of the age of Aquarius (or was it?), the year which saw the uprising of dictatorial nation-states in the Arab world, we admired enthusiastic citizens in many countries who took to the streets to demonstrate against inequalities and an unsustainable world economy, it was the year when David Cameron slagged off Europe with his veto more than the Iron Lady ever did, David Attenborough showed us a Frozen planet

At Old Hall, we meditated with Russian wooffer, Katia, in order to prepare for the age of Aquarius, we followed the Arabian spring with interest, we occupied the Small Sitting Room and we started to work towards a common understanding of consensus as a decision-making process, watched Attenborough's Frozen planet in the library.

And lots of other things took place, too. This year the editors of The Trusty Tractor encouraged writers to try a new format. Inspired by the Suffolk birdlife, we started tweeting – here are the fabulous 160-character contributions:

It never ceases to amaze me that so many wonderful people visit us each year as volunteers. Life at Old Hall is richer for the enthusiasm, the laughter and, sometimes, the tears that they bring.

/Rosalind

Some people paint the town red when they have fun- Dillon the cutey paints the ladies blue.

/Rob



For a New Year's resolution learn kung fu. No, not fighting! In Chinese the word means skill gained through practice, so you can have kung fu in painting or cookery /Leon

One of the best things to happen to me is summertime. Spring and autumn are Ok, too. /Jo



Jo's 90th – Hamilton, 3,
helps with the candles

My New Year wish is that everyone can
treat and respect everyone else as equals in
2012.

/Jake

Some people asked for a special
permission to write more than 160
character texts.

Leaves and twigs

Its that time of year.
The time when squalls send
leaves scurrying through the
orchard like geese in
fright.

When gunmetal heavy, steel
grey clouds move low and
menacing as they race
overhead almost touching the
trees. When blackbirds pitch
their skills in flight and
dance with the wind as they
play. Gusts that shake the
landscape, grey, green
orange, brown.

I take a break from raking
the leaves and picking up
the pruning's to look around
the orchard and marvel.
Its that time of year.

David Hodgson, Dec 8th 2011

Yesterday
Perhaps
Some days before,
Homo Sentients
Feelings drew.
On reflection,
Homo Sapiens said
In fact
Aesthetics I name;
Soul I beget too.
Yet, today, at Old Hall,
The lot
Consensus
Know not.

/Fabio

Oh it's great to be warm now winter's here,
Secondary glazing, Dragon blazing,
Bilke chopping, splitting and spitting.
tree felling, tree planting- get out there and
wield that axe
Share a fire -Saturday nights at the movies,
Save the Frozen Planet
Keep the home fires burning!

/Gelia



Hiya, my name is Angel
and I'm a new member.
When I first came, the others
weren't very nice to me but it
seems to be getting better.
Maybe they are just jealous
about my crooked nose
– it is very unusual.

Child Cycle

The postman will die before his next delivery.
A substitute will take his place
And realize he too will die before his last shift.

The births of blue-eyed babies will flood
Over the brown-haired angels,
And their stomachs will bloat

And bother their mothers.
But nothing will change for the caged bird
Pecking at its feathers violently,

Ready to exit and become extinct.

Backyard forests
Filled with dead junkyard dogs
Will be racked and showered, unfortunately.

The pipes belonging to the broken porcelain sinks
Will wait forever to be glued back together
And all these particles of matter,

Garbage that shines in the light,
Will die and stay here to rot
Below our feet.

And it's sad. Life's mosaic is sad.

/Sam – yankee doodle and poet

As new members this year it's been a very exciting time for Andrew and I. Everything just seemed to fall into place and in April we started heavy duty work on our unit. In 1976 I was born here and always felt drawn back. Not very good with words to express how I feel about Old Hall I have stolen a few snippets from a letter written by a recent Pot Ap, Jude, who has captured the essence of my feelings. *'.....I enjoyed waking up and thinking I must go & find someone who's off to do some jobs outside that I can learn about.....I just thought to myself, this is it - I'm happy in overalls working.....the part of me who's heart skips a beat with excitement at what you've created at Old Hall and at the idea that I might somehow contribute....'* Long may it last.

/Jess

My highlights this year have been seeing first and second generation Old Hall children coming together here for celebrations. Toms's and Sally's pre-wedding do, Jessica, Iona and Rosie having a joint Alice-in Wonderland theme birthday party, Charity fundraising event for Tania Heath, Jenny and Louise bringing their boys here to celebrate their birthdays... and the rest. The extended family you acquire when you grow up at Old Hall makes for special, long-lasting friendships, a support network for life. How good is that!!

/Kerstin



The Good Life – it *was* a 1970s TV series about a family who adopted an alternative lifestyle, growing their own vegetables and generating their own electricity. It *is* now a reality show starring Josh, Elin, Noah and Metta Good who have just landed from Hurdy-gurdy land and are now learning new skills at Old Hall community. They cannot seem to move on from the honeymoon period and find it very difficult to take off the rose-coloured glasses. Noah particularly loves listening to Abba-songs in the kitchen, Metta enjoyed Josie Long raving about Sweden at the impromptu comedy evening in the chapel.



The harvest song

We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
And then it's fed and watered
By Old Hall's mighty hand:
We get the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft, refreshing rain.

chorus

All good foods around us
Are grown by you and me
Then thanks to us,
and wwoofers all,
and don't forget the pee!

So here's to all the growers
Of brassicas and roots;
Of geenhouse veg and and all those beans,
Tomatoes and the fruits;
The hedging and the ditching,
The trees that grow up tall;
The wood that's chopped, the tractors fixed,
It's all go at Old Hall.

chorus

All good foods around us
Are grown by you and me
Then thanks to us,
and wwoofers all,
and don't forget the pee!

So thanks for contributions,
For milk and cheese so good,
The seed time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food.
We'll do our best to get on
and leave the plots all clear,
And then it won't be quite so hard,
To start again next year.

When you are retired you don't have enough to do-discuss

It's three weeks before Christmas and I know I must locate the father Christmas outfit before I disappear off to France on the 22nd- last year there were frantic phone calls on the 24th as the aforesaid suit was locked in a reading room...no key.... This year it got left in the Queen Anne hall,and I said I would put it away. . . After searching all the usual places I decided that it just might be in the cupboard under the Queen Anne stairs..... now I have been here quite a few years (!) and this is one of the few places I have never ever ventured- with good reason I thought as I pulled everything out: broken garden chairs; two emergency electric heaters; panto props from 1990 onwards; the base for one of the round tables that has been missing for YEARS; umbrellas; walking boots; welly boots; draught excluders; outdoor lights(how many times have we needed THOSE?);gardening tools; axes saws and crowbars; a large mirror; a Useful bag containing everything from towrope to string; a box of dust sheets; miscellaneous tablecloths and hangings and everything covered in fine brick dust- various holes having been drilled over the years for essential electric work.

Reluctantly I realised how stupid it would be to pile everything back so I replanned my week to include a major sort and clean-an odd choice of work in a week when we are up to our eyes in major building works (central bathroom and boot corridor), but no-one bats an eyelid at eccentricities here. So, now, if you're looking for a space to stash (and lose) Very Important Community Items for the next twenty years...there's a small, dry space just waiting to be overfilled again. Oh, in case you were wondering, it was on top of the dressing-up wardrobe upstairs!

/Rachel



Secret santa action 2010

Highlight of the year? – a wonderful outdoor party + barn dance in the chapel in July for Tom Davies and Sally Doxford. They would be married in October but way down in the Deep South (Sussex), all of East Anglia would not be able to get there, so we had a 'pre-wedding' party in the Far East in advance!

The best thing about 2011 here? Was it the confirmation of how important to Old Hall has been the moving in of new people in the last few years...? Or was it the awareness of just how much people do for each other in this place? Time and effort and skills... Day in, day out. Two good reasons Old Hall lives!

/Steve

R.I.P. Freda Davies. At 93, she might indeed have been the oldest wwoofer in the world, we never tested it as we didn't call her a wwoofer, but once a year she came for a week to deal with the harvested onions .. Wouldn't stop until the work was finished, despite any attempts to take her to the seaside... My best mother and a friend of Old Hall... (Steve)

Success!

Ska Night : we held a benefit night in November to raise money for an indigenous community in Cambodia whose land and livelihood is under threat. People came from miles around, the 'chapel' was heaving, and we surprised ourselves by raising over £2k...

A date in the diary :

Friends & Family Weekend

6-8 July 2011

A camping weekend, sun and food and fun.

Details nearer the time: www.oldhall.org.uk.

