



Hyphen 58

News from the Office

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux
association sans but lucratif | July 2016

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90 years Office International

Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK, President of the International Office



Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK

At the moment you are reading the 58th issue of the Hyphen whose predecessor was first published in July 1930 with the title:

„Bulletin
de

L'Office International du Coin des Terre et des Jardin Ouvriers
Verbandszeitschrift der Internationalen Kleingärtnerorganisationen
International Office of Allotments Gardens Leagues
Ufficio Internazionale del Cantuccio di Terra e dei Giardini Operai“

Back then and today the function of this international publication is to be a link between the national federations, to report on the development of the allotment garden movement in the member organisations and to discuss common subjects.

When our ancestors founded the “Office International des Jardins ouvriers“ on 3rd October 1926 they probably would not have dared to dream that 90 years later a unified Europe would be reality.

Inevitably one must feel admiration for our founding fathers from Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland because thanks to their idealism we can celebrate our 90th anniversary this year. Only a big dose of idealism could have made antagonised states bury the past and found a common organisation for allotment gardens.

If you just think of how long and circuitous communication was – compared with today – you recognise to which great achievements and tenacity we owe our existence.

However, you must not believe that the shared aim, to establish and strengthen the allotment garden movement in Europe, was strong

enough to bury all differences. The decision to establish the bureau of the “Green International” in Luxembourg was for a certain time discussed and also the phrasing of the statutes did not experience undivided consensus.

Already from the beginning it was the manifested aim of the Office to help the poorest people to get a small piece of land to permanently relieve the afflictions of the workers caused by the industrialisation. It was demanded to establish permanent sites to enable people to steadily improve their nutrition by growing their own fruit and vegetables.

However, a second idea was already present too. Allotment gardens do not only serve the allotment gardeners as a place of activity and recreation, they also have the general function to improve the appearance of cities and should also provide regeneration to the general public. Therefore, they were supposed to be open to all.

Although the Office could not fulfil its duties for many years from 1939 on, due to World War II, the people in charge remained attached to the idea of allotment gardens and work already restarted in September 1947 with an executive board meeting.

After the fright of the war, the post-war period was also marked by deprivation and the hardship of the reconstruction.

However, within the following decades the allotment gardens developed in many places from a spot which granted the survival of whole families to sites of recreational activities and rest. This fact is also visible in the topics of the international congresses which dealt repeatedly with this subject.

But also another development concerned the federations across the borders. In some places allotment garden sites were threatened in their continuity because of the increasing wealth. After the allotment gardens had lost their function of feeding the people whole areas were sacrificed for other projects. On international level this becomes manifest in the topic of congresses dealing with the

topic of the value and place allotment gardens have for and in urban planning.

The subjects which concern the allotment gardeners and which are discussed within congresses, seminars and workshops have changed in the past nine decades. Nature and environment protection, as well as expert advice were for example added. Nevertheless, some questions have not lost their timeliness since the foundation of the Office International as for example legal protection or integration in the planning schemes.

There is one other matter we have already shared for decades, in fact since the beginning of the International Office:

As different as the allotment garden movement may have developed in our countries we all are allotment gardeners with all of our body, soul

and a great deal of our heart. We are allotment gardeners who appreciate the exchange of ideas and experiences with like-minded people and who fancy learning from each other. We are allotment gardeners who love being part of a great international movement like the International Office.

Activity report 2015

2nd part

3) International Organisations

Council of Europe

The Office took part in the meetings organised for the non-governmental organisations.

In the Council of Europe the workshop “Human rights and climate change” organised a round table on 29th September in order to draw people’s attention to climate change and the consequences thereof.

The round table was led by Lord John PRESCOTT, former negotiator of the Kyoto agreements, Sir Alan MEALE, member of the PACE, Yves HAUSS, Climatologist, Merete BJERREGAARD, Directorate General of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Dina IONESCO, Head of the Migration of the International Organisation for Migration, Gita PARIHAR, Delegate from the NGOs Working group “Climate and Human Rights” within the United Nations, Dimitrios CAVOURAS, Officer from the Anna LINDH Foundation as well as Anne-Marie CHAVANON, Edith WENGER and Karl DONERT, Head of the Working Group on climate change and Human Rights at the Council of Europe.

The discussions gave a clear insight into the consequences of climate change on human rights, as for example the right of life, water, health, ... and on the environment.

The discussions underlined that:

- Throughout the world the agreement that climate change has an impact both on human rights, the earth and the environment is increasing.
- Not all the countries are yet ready to sign binding texts.
- The Council of Europe has the

necessary instruments which just need to be put into force.

- National cases of good practice are needed as examples.
- The Paris summit can only be a start, not a final goal.

A great subject, that is currently dealt with within the Council of Europe is the subject of inclusive cities, above all the intercultural dialogue. This subject is also the subject of the European local democracy week 2015.

The Office could present eight examples of allotment garden activities in this area, which are now online on the Council of Europe’s homepage. This is publicity for the allotment gardeners and shows to the authorities and to the society the numerous efforts they do in the social area especially for a harmonious living together of all citizens.

This lobbying was continued on a national level.

European Union

The Polish allotment gardeners criticized that “the Office could not establish a sustainable cooperation between the Office and the European institutions. According to them this reduced the chances to get European regulations concerning allotment gardens, which could have contributed to the improvement of the situation of the allotment gardeners in the national member states.

The Office has within its contacts with the European Commission received several statements underlining on one hand that the allotment gardens are beneficial for nature and environment as well as for the social cohesion and have to be supported, but that on the other hand they are

not within the area of competences of the European Union. According to the subsidiary principle the allotment gardens, their legal protection and their support are within the competences of the national states.

Despite this fact, the general assembly decided to take up contact once more with the president of the European Commission as decision making organ with the request to consider allotment gardens in the European policy and legislation. Also the president of the European Parliament was asked to support this demand in order that the allotments and their undeniable value could be considered within the European policy. The federations were requested to contact their national members of the European Parliament to also support this Office request. The members of the European Parliament from Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands were contacted.

Some members of the European Parliament from Luxembourg, Belgium and France answered to the letter sent by the federations.

Following the advice of the President of the European Commission’s cabinet, the Office asked for a meeting with the Commissioners for environment matters respectively regional policy. The Office of Commissioner VELLA, competent for environment matters informed the Office that before such a meeting the Office had to register with the European Transparency Registry.

This was done in November. Since then the Office gets informed on all citizens’ consultations launched by the Commission in the areas that concern us: i.e. climate actions, envi-

ronment questions, youth, education, culture and regional policies.

This gives now the opportunity to the allotment garden movement to raise awareness within the European Institutions.

The meeting with the office of Commissioner VELLA took place on December 15th, 2015.

The Office representatives Hervé BONNAVAUD and Malou WEIRICH were informed that the environment department of the European Commission was preparing a framework document/policy on green infrastructures. Are concerned areas that are not protected as Nature 2000 zones.

The European Commission, however, has no legislative power in this area and needs the support of the Member States. The Commission can only stimulate and help/improve the transposition of this framework policy.

The representatives of the Commission were interested of being better informed on the allotment movement and highly appreciated the multifunctionality of our gardens.

It is now in our hands to make the adequate lobbying in order to see the allotments integrated in this text.

The President of the European Parliament did not answer to the letter sent in September.

Europa Nostra

Europa Nostra grants every year the European prize for cultural heritage and the Europa Nostra Award.

Are concerned projects in the categories of conservation, research, dedicated service by individuals or organisation and educational training and awareness raising in the areas of for example cultural landscapes, historic parks and gardens, larger areas

of designed landscape or of cultural environmental or agricultural significance.

The call for entries or the reminder for people familiar with these prizes was sent out on September 1st. Deadline for the sending in of the documents was October 1st.

The French federation was of the opinion that the allotment site in Marsannay-la-Côte complied with the fixed criteria to ask for a diploma, but could not assemble all the necessary documents in the very short time frame. It will try to present a demand in 2016.

The German federation was also contacted to check if the allotment site Karl FÖRSTER in Leipzig with the allotment museum could comply with the fixed criteria of one of the prizes and to submit a demand in 2016.

4) Contacts with federations that are not member of the International Office

Concerning the cooperation with the Japanese allotment gardeners one has to inform that these allotment gardeners sent in an example to be inserted in the brochure "Children and Nature".

The Japanese allotment gardeners also informed that they train allotment garden advisers. The subjects of their allotment garden advice are: Cultivation, but also creation and managing of sites.

They also sent a detailed report on the evolution of the allotments in Japan with the existing problems and the positive news. The Office offered to help them if it is necessary and if they wish so.

According to the decision of the general assembly, the Office proposed full membership in the Office to the Japanese allotment gardeners.

The Japanese allotment gardeners have accepted this proposal and are now full member of the Office. All the allotment gardeners unified in the International Office welcome them very heartily.

The affiliation document will be signed during a ceremony at the occasion of the international congress in Vienna.

5) Information to interested people and to external media

This year the Office has again given information concerning allotments to students, respectively to the media.

A specific demand came from Norway, where a journalist wanted to know the quantities that could be grown on a plot of vegetables and fruit. The existing data could be sent to him.

An article concerning the study session in Luxembourg was published in the Luxembourgish press.

The Office and the national federations have in future to increase their presence in the media in order to increase the focus on allotments and to underline the value of the allotments for all.

Luxembourg, December 2015
The executive board

The allotment association “Am Ulmenweg”, Merseburg (Germany) received the diploma for social activities



History, tradition and superb buildings make a town like Merseburg, very interesting, but for living you need more. For many people areas to rest and green spaces are elements that make a town pleasant to live in. The allotment site “am Ulmenweg” can precisely offer this both to its tenants and to the visitors. Many people from the nearby situated building blocks come for a walk or simply to enjoy the idyllic greenery on the site. However, the effects of the association “Ulmenweg” reach far into the community and this not only as a nearby recreational area. A particular aim of the allotment garden friends is the living together. One aspect of this is the cooperation with the multiple generation house in Merseburg. Here you find people of all ages, from the smallest child up to very old people, living in that house and benefiting from one another.

This form of living together can also be found on the allotment garden site. The association has succeeded in reducing the average age to a great extent by especially sensitizing young families with children for gardening. Some parents are aged between 20 and 22 and bring new ideas into the association. There are no problems resulting from the mixture of generations. The allotment gardeners are used working with one another, not considering cultural barriers and gaining from this. Late repatriates and migrants from different parts of the world have been a solid element of this association for a long time that is, however, pretty young. If a person has to renounce to gardening due to age or time reasons, this is nearly always a very difficult departure and thus many of them remain member of the association. There is a garden where people can meet and

so these former gardeners can find a place where they can still, after having given up their own plot, have the feeling of gardening.

The association really cares for its active members. Thirty-four trained gardening advisers are ready to answer all the questions concerning gardening. Especially for young gardening newcomers this is a very important institution, because an adapted hint at the right moment can often prevent deceptions. An internally organized child care service gives the parents some free time, during which they can work without being disturbed and without having constantly to watch their small children. In the association “Am Ulmenweg” one can feel the community spirit and one can really see how gardening can unify people across all generations and cultures.

The allotment association “Am Waldessaum II”, Rostock- Warnemünde (Germany) received the diploma for an ecological gardening



A small piece of ground near the Baltic sea is a dream for many people. The allotment site “Am Waldessaum II” in Rostock-Warnemünde can precisely offer this. It is not astonishing that the association’s waiting list is long. At the present time 50 people are waiting to get a vacant plot. People that only come here for the weekend are not well seen guests, because the main purpose on the allotment site is gardening. Therefore, the journey to reach the site cannot be too long. Consequently people that want to get a plot, can’t live further away than 50 kilometers. Weekend tourists should look elsewhere for getting a piece of land. However, they can visit the site on a biking tour: in fact the allotment site is linked to the coastal cycling path enabling people to discover the coast

of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein while cycling.

One cannot deny that the location of the site is particularly wonderful. In very close proximity you find the nature protection area “Stoltera” with its impressive steep coasts and the dunes with a coastal forest which attracts every year numerous fans of nature. On the other side of the allotment site you have the landscape protection area “Diedrichshäger Land”. The allotment garden site is so not only part of the near recreation area of Rostock, but forms an ecological meaningful transition between built up areas and nature.

However, not only nature and landscape are important in the association “Am Waldessaum”, but also the

social engagement. The association cooperates with a nursery and a primary school and sensitizes already the smallest children for gardening. An especially laid-out volley-ball ground on the site is particularly appreciated by young people. Together with the association for traditional costumes of Warnemünde one keeps traditions alive and one cooperates with the lighthouse association. So the association has become a lively part of the culture in Warnemünde.

Moreover, the structure of the allotment gardeners enables to favour the social function. Families with children are preferred when allocating a plot, but of course only if the family is really interested in gardening.

The allotment association “Am Südhang” in Zwickau (Germany) received the diploma for innovative projects



Zwickau in Saxony had a tormented history. The urban area of Marienthal hosting the allotment site “Am Südhang” has only belonged to Zwickau since 1900. Before, it was an independent locality. Today you cannot notice much of this fact anymore, because Marienthal is situated close to the town centre. The name “Am Südhang” already constitutes a whole program: The site is situated on a very nice slope – offering the best conditions for gardening. But above all the site is completely in the hands of children. Work with the youngest is the allotment gardeners’ priority and they can show impressive results.

In the “Schreberino-Garden” the young gardeners work to their heart’s content. However, they do not only plant and harvest. They also learn how to prepare tasty dishes with the garden products. There is no better

way to make children learn from their youngest age onwards to appreciate the value of our food. There is also a playground to let steam off and a barefoot path where children can discover nature with all their senses. This project was realized in cooperation with the day-care centre “Anne Frank” situated nearby. 127 children stay all day long in the day care centre. Approximately 20% come regularly to visit the garden and the allotment gardeners like this; especially the cooperation between the members, the children, the parents and the educators which is characterized by a relaxed living together.

Not only children are appreciated guests on the site “Am Südhang”. Some empty plots are in fact cultivated by unemployed people in cooperation with the job centre of Zwickau. Here they can have a meaningful occupation within a pleasant communi-

ty. The harvest is offered to the food bank of Zwickau and is thus given to people in need living in this town.

The people using the site for a walk cannot only look: Tasting is absolutely required on the site “Am Südhang”. There is a meadow with fruit trees. It constitutes a tasting garden in the real sense of the word. Everyone who wants to can try these nice fruit. Not only allotment gardeners are happy about this, but above all the visitors without a garden of their own use this mouth-watering offer.

With all these offers, “Südhang” is much more than a picturesque allotment site in a great location. It has become an important institution for the whole community. Their activities reach much further than the limits of the allotment site.

History of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux 1926 – 2016 1st part

Malou WEIRICH,
Secretary General of the International Office



*„A patch of earth for everyone to rest
A bit of sky to breathe“*

This is a statement that was valid in the past,
is valid today, and will also be valid tomorrow.

Introduction

At the general assembly in Luxembourg on 5th and 6th March, it was decided to publish several articles with an overview of the Office International's history for the occasion of its 90th anniversary.

The goal is to remind member gardeners of how our international association developed, the path it took, and in this way to create a foundation

to prepare for the future, to remove the obstacles in our path, and to take the right direction.

This overview of our history is not a scientific study nor does it claim to be complete.

In several articles we will analyse the situation pre-1926, the foundation of the Office, its development, its mis-

sions in light of ever-new conditions and by taking into account the ever-new challenges that have presented themselves over the last 90 years.

The situation for allotment gardens in different countries before 1926*

At the end of the 19th century, the allotment garden movement developed in many European countries. The first national federations were created. The conditions and developments in the founding member states of the Office International were very different.

Germany

The year 1864 was the starting point for the development of allotment gardens in Germany. At this point in time, Dr Hauschild created the first playground, following the principles of his friend, Dr Schreiber. This playground was then surrounded by gardens for children, which were later turned into allotment gardens.

In 1926, the association had 407,316 members across 33 branches. Worker gardens were protected by law in 1919 and by a number of rulings taken by different administrations. The law allowed the putting at disposal of allotments and only allowed the lease to be terminated for an important cause. In order to avoid excessive land rent, arbitration courts regulated the differences between leaseholders and gardeners. Under an additional law, associations recognised as of public utility could rent



out communal land to create worker gardens.

In several States, notably Prussia, they created offices and designated special advisors for worker gardens. Some towns created worker garden sites with leases with no fixed term and made sure that town planning included land for worker gardens.

The government also supported worker gardens financially.

The German federation created a savings bank for its associations, as well as an insurance against accidents (useful especially for the Schreber associations, which practiced sports) and a legal advice board.

The federation published a regular bulletin and leaflets about worker gardens. At a regional level it organised conferences on gardening

topics and distributed prizes and rewards. Films to promote the propaganda were made.

The associations had to pay a yearly contribution of 24 Pfennig per member.

England and Scotland

The English federation, under the name of National Union of Allotments and Small Holdings, brought together 600 local associations with 100,000 members, each of whom tended an allotment for their own needs.

Whilst the land was only granted under naked possessor rights, the law obliged land owners to give tenants six months' notice if they wanted to reclaim their land to build on, and three months' notice for any other purpose. The lease could not be terminated between April and September except if compensation was paid. The law also allowed the local authorities to expropriate land if they needed to create allotments. However, this option was seldom used.

Associations paid the federation a yearly fee of 2 pence per member, as well as a fixed lump sum of 5 shillings per allotment garden site.

In Scotland there was an independent federation of 3,000 members across 80 associations. Its goal was to encourage the development of worker gardens. The federation obtained the vote of three laws to protect them. However, the difficulty of obtaining land with long term leases prevented the development of worker gardens.

The yearly fee amounted to 5 pence per member.

Austria

Before 1926, the national federation had 19,700 members, of which 18,000 were in Vienna. They were split across 143 associations, of which 22 were cooperatives. The

federation brought together those who tended an allotment for their own needs, whether they were owners or tenants.

Worker gardens were legally protected during the First World War. They remained so, but only under a provisional ruling. The federation's goal was to obtain long term legal protection for worker gardens. In Vienna, the permanency of worker gardens was assured by an agreement between the municipality and the worker garden associations.

Within the town council there was a special section for worker gardens. The council also reserved half of its land for the creation of worker gardens and it gave them this land for a reduced price. It also gave worker gardens a reduction in property tax and water bills. Finally, it made significant loans available to worker garden associations for managing its land, in the form of interest free loans to be repaid over ten years.

The federation published a regular bulletin, gave legal advice and organised conferences to promote the use of worker gardens and particularly the raising of farmyard animals.

The federation received a yearly fee of 3 Schillings per member.

Belgium

The Ligue Belge du Coin de Terre et du Foyer was created on the 10th of April 1896 by Joseph Goemaere and Father Gruel. It counted 63,000 allotments. They were spread across the whole country and were centrally managed by local and regional groups. The central committee had its headquarters in Brussels.

Thanks to the recent creation of a central loan fund, the Ligue hoped to find the necessary funds to allow each association to buy the land that it would then make available to workers.

France

The Ligue Française du Coin de Terre et du Foyer, the national federation of worker gardens, had 605 benefactor and propagandist members.

In 1923, it had 263 charities with 52,400 worker gardens.

130,000 worker gardens were created by industry for its staff. These gardens do not figure in the above mentioned statistics.

The allotments were made available to the fathers of families without gardens, on the sole condition that they tended to them themselves for their own needs. In return, they had to share the costs of the charities by paying a modest yearly fee of between 10 and 20 Francs, depending on the size of the plot.

There were a great number of workers who owned an allotment or were paying tenants. However, they didn't feel the need to group together and join the associations.

The Ligue du Coin de Terre was recognised as a public utility organisation. Because of this, it could receive subsidies from the State to buy land and receive donations and legacies from individuals for its activities.

The legislative measures taken in favour of allotments only applied to cooperative societies or societies whose objective was to give workers their own land. Therefore, the majority of associations couldn't benefit from them. The law also allowed councils, public savings establishments and charities to use their own resources to create worker gardens. Other laws facilitated getting loans to acquire allotments. Special legislative dispositions protected allotments connected to a house or where they constituted a family dwelling along with the house.

The government also financially supported the worker garden movement.

It must be highlighted that various special institutions were connected to the worker garden associations, such as joint purchasing cooperatives for seeds and fertiliser, house-keeping schools for young girls of gardener families, mutual insurance companies, etc.

Conferences were organised to teach workers how to garden. Competitions were also organised with prizes to motivate gardeners, as well as gardening fairs to gather families together and give them a healthy distraction.

Luxembourg

Before 1926, the Ligue Luxembourgeoise du Coin de Terre et du Foyer had 3,600 members, split across 20 local associations. 40% of members owned their garden, 60% were tenants.

There were no legal dispositions regulating worker gardens.

Nevertheless, the State budget used to include a yearly credit of 12,000 Francs for creating and maintaining allotment gardens.

The federation published a monthly bulletin with illustrations. A savings bank was created to allow the worker to pay his land.

Each member gardener paid a yearly fee of 5 Francs, which included the subscription to the bulletin.

Switzerland

The federation had 7,193 members, grouped in different local associations. The largest was in Zurich and had 3,250 members.

There was no special legislation to protect worker gardens. The MP Gel-

phe presented the international workers' conference in 1926, with the aim of obtaining land with no fixed term lease for worker gardens.

The Swiss federation received no subsidy from the State.

In Switzerland, contrary to all of the other federations, the individual members paid no fee to the national federation.

The representatives of these seven federations had already had contact with each other before 1926 to discuss their problems. They met at various national congresses. From these increasingly stronger links came the birth of the Office International in 1926.

* Summary of the national reports presented at the time of the founding session of the Office International on 3rd October 1926.

To be continued

The services offered by the French allotment federation to its members



Missions:

Creation, lay-out, rehabilitation, development, administration, animation and defence of member allotment associations.

Composition:

250 associations, 25,000 allotment families, 22 ambassadors on regional and departmental level, a study office. In the Ile-de-France the federation administrates directly via its structure "Les Jardins franciliens" (The gardens around Paris) more than 3,500 allotment plots on 76 allotment sites for its local partners (local authorities and social lessors above all).

The French federation is at your disposal

Help is given to you:

- The federation gives all the necessary advice for the administration of the associations (administration accounts, statutes, etc.) to its members.
- The ambassadors of the federation on departmental and regional level propose their expertise to the leaders of the associations, who wish to rehabilitate or to create gardens
- The federation organises educational measures (subjects: administration, accounts, a gardening that is respectful of the environment)

- The federation negotiates insurance policies at very competitive prices (physical accidents, insurances of sheds and tool sheds, technical buildings or associative buildings)
- It has to be underlined that the liability insurance is included in the yearly affiliation fee.

The federation puts documents at the disposal of its members via the Intranet of its website:

www.jardins-familiaux.asso.fr

- associative administration, communication, education etc.
- The federation helps its members for the working out of new regulations, statutes etc. following modifications or additional agreements.

You are defended:

- The federation can help setting up mediation in cases of difficulties with allotment gardeners, local authorities or lease holders.
- The lawyers of the federation can help and advice the member associations on legal questions in case of difficulties.

You are represented:

- The federation represents and defends the member associations in meetings on national and international level with the ministries, institutional and private partners etc.

You are informed:

- „Jardin-Familial de France (Allotment garden in France)“ the federation’s magazine is issued twice per trimester and is conceived by gardeners for gardeners. It aims at sensitizing people for the practises of a gardening that is respectful of the environment and at valorising the activities of its members. This magazine is proposed at a preferential price to the gardeners of the member associations.
- « Jard’Infos (Garden information): This internal letter is issued twice per trimester and aims at informing the responsible people of the associations of the federation’s news.
- “Web site“: It is a space dedicated to the members and provides them with specific documents ranged according to specific subjects: administration of associations, information letters, communication etc.
- At the occasion of the annual general assembly of the federation the members are informed on the federation’s activities and finances. They meet then representatives of all the allotment associations of France and can benefit of their experiences and their initiatives.

You are supported:

- The federation can buy grounds and put these grounds at the disposal of its member associations.
- After agreement of the executive board the federation can propose financial help by two created funds: the one destined to support innovation and the other one allows to give help based on solidarity.
- The partners of the federation can give material of financial help after the study of the submitted projects.
- The affiliated associations have the possibility to get donations and legacies via the French federation because the federation is recognized of public utility.

Your activities are valorised:

- The diploma of honour and the medal of the national federation of allotment and collective gardens are given to the executive board of the member associations in order that they can honour deserving benevolent people and gardeners.
- The federation presents demands to the ministry of agriculture to grant the *mérite agricole* (state distinction) to those of its members who have brought notable services to the allotment garden movement.



The food production role of associative gardens in urban areas

2nd part

Jeanne Pourias, scientist

Garden produce

Garden produce is very diverse. The great majority is vegetables and small fruit, sometimes even flowers that are either there for decoration (allowing you to make bouquets), food production (edible flowers such as nasturtium and borage) or to protect vegetable crops (mixing plants, e.g. marigolds, tomatoes and basil). In gardens where you are allowed to plant trees, pome and stone fruit trees can constitute a significant part of your harvest. Lastly, gardens often provide other produce like wood, eggs or snails.

Bild 4: Flowers are also very much a part of allotment gardens and play a variety of roles (aesthetic, pollinator, edible...)



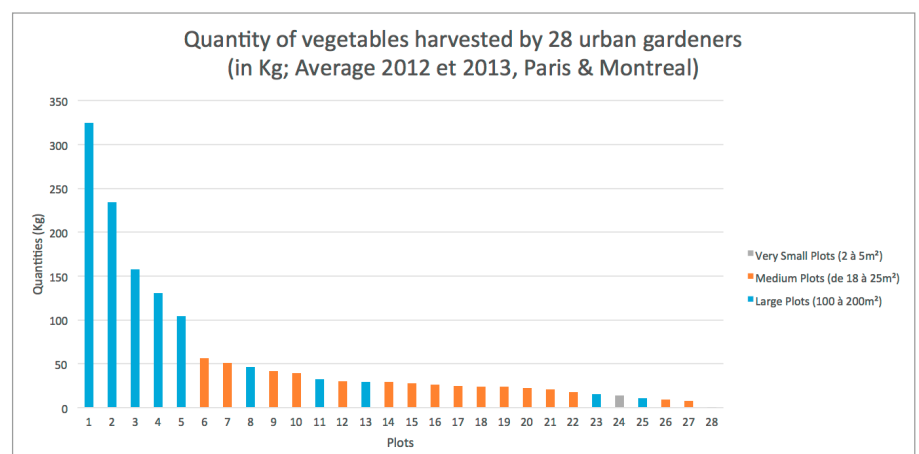
As for the quantity of fruit and vegetables produced in gardens, the results obtained in the harvest diaries show that the total produce of a plot varies greatly. In the plots studied, the quantities produced in one growing season ranged from 1 kg in a plot of 3 m² in 2013 to 393 kg in a plot of 200 m² in 2012.

Of course, the gardeners who harvested the most fruit and vegetables were those with a large plot, such as in the allotment gardens in the immediate vicinity of Paris, where the plots can measure from 100 to 200 m². However, some gardeners with large plots produced less than some gardeners with medium sized plots (18 to 25 m²), like in Montreal's community gardens or in some of the Paris "intra-muros" gardens. In fact, other factors came into play: the plot's surface that was truly dedicated to growing vegetables (once the areas dedicat-

ed to other uses such as lawn, shed etc have been taken into account), the gardeners' knowledge, the time spent gardening, their fertilisation methods, their choice of plants and the variety also significantly influence the quantities produced.

Contribution to the gardeners' food provision

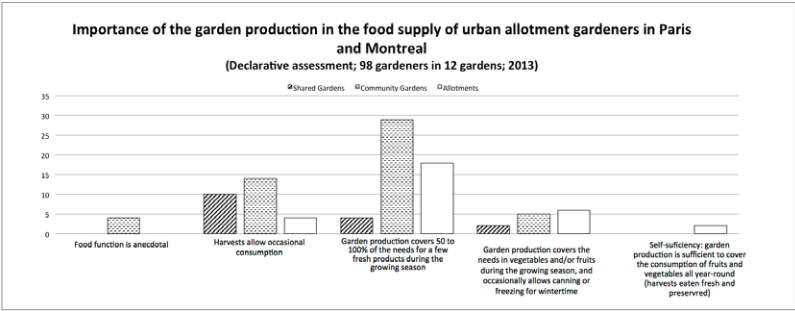
In a survey of 98 gardeners in the 12 gardens studied, we asked them to rank themselves on a scale according to their garden's contribution to their food provision, giving them 5 options ranging from a very anecdotal provision to full self-sufficiency. More than half of the gardeners who responded (53 of 98) estimated that their garden's produce met 50 to 100% of their needs for certain fresh produce during the growing season (option 3). 4 gardeners estimated that their garden's food production was anecdotal, 29 commented that



3) Small scale breeding is allowed in some shared-gardens in Paris; the council's stance on this is relatively unclear. However, it is forbidden in the majority of allotment gardens in Parisian suburbs and in community gardens in Montreal. In Montreal, the associations who are in favour of urban agriculture launched the "Ma Paule à Montréal" initiative in 2010 to demand that the breeding of hens be allowed in the city.

the garden only provided occasional consumption of what they harvested (option 2) whilst, on the other hand, 10 estimated that their garden's produce met all of their needs for fresh produce during the growing season and occasionally allowed them to keep tins for winter (option 4). Less commonly (only 2 of the gardeners questioned) the garden allowed them to be self-sufficient for fresh produce all year round (option 5). Here again, we see differences in the role of the garden and the size of the plot: in shared gardens, the majority of gardeners who were questioned selected option 2, whilst in allotment and community gardens, the majority of gardeners selected option 3.

Bild 5: Within each plot, the surface dedicated to food production varies greatly according to each gardener's aims and the space reserved for leisure, e.g. lawn, sheds, tables and chair etc.



We have also been able to measure the importance of giving in gardens: sharing part of your harvest with friends, family members or other gardeners is common practice amongst gardeners. The proportion of the harvest that is given away can be significant, and this proportion is not linked to the quantities produced: even the gardeners who produce little share their harvest.

End

Great-Britain: The People's Community Garden, a project developed on an allotment site in Ipswich, Suffolk, England

Karen Kenny, President of the National Allotment Society



Created from a germ of an idea in late 2007 and initially funded by the Peoples Millions, a competition for community groups to get funding. Out of several hundred entries in East Anglia ours was the one most voted for by the general public.

The concept was to get people together to create healthier lifestyles for the hard-to-reach sectors of society, as well as community building in a disadvantaged area, and allotment regeneration on organic principles.

Once the funds were in place the clearing of the site and the construction of the buildings and pathways was completed with the aid of the voluntary sector utilising the Probation Service, Prisoners and unemployed volunteers.

The target clientele was wide with diverse aims for each sector.

The long term unemployed can acquire new skills and job contacts and have been successful in getting people back into part time and fulltime work.

Adults with special needs, such as learning difficulties, autism or mental health issues get a sense of community, whileworking, sowing and planting etc. in the poly tunnels and gardens. This is the therapy for them and a means to increase self-worth. BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups such as the Bangladeshi befriending group, African women's support, the Refugee council and the Indian Community all use our plots, where we have a great interaction as each is growing the food of their culture and sharing their recipes and skills with others. This is especially the case at our annual gar-

den party where the general public can enjoy the multi ethnic stalls each providing native dishes for all to try.

The older generation from care homes, the blind society and older volunteers also exchange skills with younger volunteers in a perfect community integration. They all work together and the younger generation benefits from it as we provide skills for work and job contacts.

Local primary schools also work on plots as well as in their schools, linking in with the curriculum and teaching about healthy eating and the environment along with other cultures' ways of gardening from all around the world. For upper schools we work on the allotments and in schools providing them with skills and work





experience. We have a beekeeping project with the schools and another programme.

The fork to fork project with our newly restored pavilion and kitchen close to the allotments allowing the children and others to enjoy the sowing, caring, harvesting and cooking and, of course, eating their very own produce. We also utilise this new resource for a community market where surplus food from the project can be available to the local people, further enhancing the local community integration of all.

We run courses for all to participate, such as beekeeping courses and our latest Garden gate 2 courses where youngsters can get work experience. In this project they gain skills in plant production, use of garden machinery, basic construction, market experience, garden maintenance, wildlife gardening and conservation, and readiness for work, all under the guidance of horticultural staff and volunteers. To keep old crafts alive we have a course for all on willow weaving and creating a hedge which is a cross between a hedge and a fence.

From a small germ of an idea this has changed into a multinational acclaimed project gaining funding from many different partners, as well as public funding on fundraising websites.

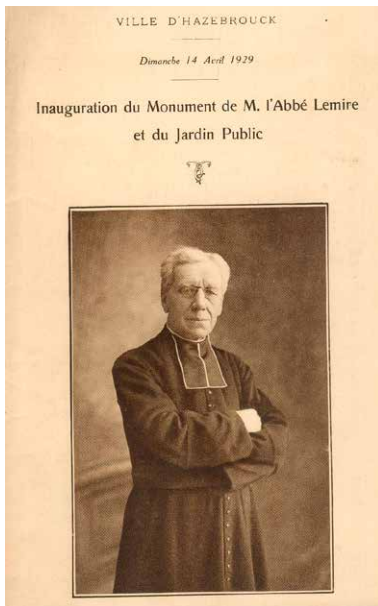
Now working as part of ActivLives to deliver initiatives that help motivate, support and inspire people living in areas of deprivation, make positive changes to their lifestyle and improve their own health, well-being and employability.

We grow stronger people and communities by keeping them connected, informed and involved through the provision of support services, community projects, activities, health information, education and training, practical advice, volunteering and work placements. ActivLives with the people's community garden mission is to create healthier communities, combat loneliness, reduce health and training inequalities and enable people to live full, active and independent lives.

Since 2008 enhancing the lives of many hundreds of people, creating a thriving, environmentally and healthy community providing new friends, new experiences and new opportunities for every sector of society in keeping with the allotment ethos.

France: Father Lemire, a social visionary priest

Hervé Bonnavaud



This is a topic that I want to revisit on the anniversary of the creation of the International Office du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux on 3rd October 1926 and of the French allotment federation on the 21st of October 1896. The French allotment movement was instigated by Father Lemire's friend, Father Gruel, a French priest in Brussels who contributed to the founding of the Ligue Belge du Coin de Terre et du Foyer (Belgian allotment garden and household association) several years earlier.

For the 110th anniversary of the Ligue Française du Coin de Terre et du Foyer (French allotment garden and household association) in 2006, René Mazurier, then administrator and member of the magazine's editorial board of the French federation, wrote a very nice article about Father Lemire and the his-

tory of our movement in the magazine. I suggest you re-read the three pages of his article, which you can download from the website www.jardins-familiaux.asso.fr and discover the man and his legislative and social work, which has left its mark on 30 years of the 3rd Republic's history.

Jules Lemire was born on the 25th of April 1853 in Vieux Berquin, a Northern village located near Hazebrouck, on a modest farm of 14 hectares. His parents had five children and his mother died when he was only eight years old. He was raised by two very religious aunts, who were farmers. Very quickly he showed remarkable intellectual capability. He achieved a Bachelor in Literature and Science in 1872. He admired Blaise Pascal, a 17th century French mathematician, physician, inventor, philosopher, moralist and theologian.

As a student Jules Lemire wanted to study law but the religious authorities did not view higher education favourably. He was ordained a priest in 1878 and, given his aptitude, he should have gone onto the French Seminary in Rome but his family's financial situation wouldn't allow it.

He taught philosophy, rhetoric, French, Latin and Greek at the St. François School in Hazebrouck for 15 years.

With his older students he managed the Saint Vincent de Paul conference and often visited a number of families in need who lived in the miners' cottages. There he discovered the precarious situation of the cramped accommodation given to the workers by the factory owner, the length of the boring and tiring days, the work carried out by children, and the lack of entertainment except rare rest



breaks. All of that bothered him. As did the fact that going to the inn was the only leisure activity for the workers, who went there to spend their paltry salary and who, under the effects of alcohol, would sometimes go home and beat their wife and children.

The moral and financial misery of the workers in this region left a deep mark on his life as a priest and politician.

During a trip to Great Britain he met Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, who played a significant political and social role in the opposing conflicts of workers and managers. He would be extremely influenced by this meeting and very soon would wish to get involved despite his hierarchy's opposition. He wanted to improve the workers' situation and soon realised that it would happen through politics.

He therefore finished his career as a teacher and put himself forward in the Northern elections. He was elected deputy in 1893 and remained there until his death in 1923. He was elected seven times and became "the most popular priesthood in France".

In 1914 he was elected mayor of Hazebrouck.

His political programme in 1893

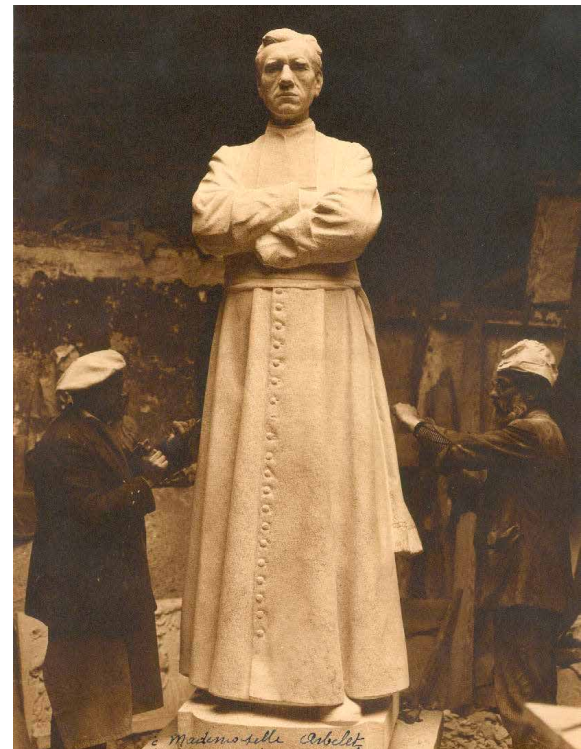
- Change law and regulations around work and share of output
- Find a way between socialism and liberalism
- Resolve social problems by reconciling workers and managers, as the social issue has a moral founding for them
- Proposal to create a minister for labour in 1899 (which was created under Clémenceau in 1906)
- He instigated three major reforms:
 - Weekly rest
 - Benefits for families with at least three children
 - Elderly and disabled pension with the support of the State, managers and workers
- He was also at the origin of a number of other social advances:
 - Regulations on the length of time and conditions of work for women and minors
 - He proposed giving shares to workers, including benefits, and creating separate trade unions for managers and workers to replace traditional mixed unions
 - He led the fight for the defence of mothers:
 - Letting mothers return home with a living allowance
 - Family votes and adopting a proportionate vote
 - Defence of smallholdings and unseizable family goods
 - Obligating salary to be paid at the factory and no longer at the inn

His political work

He was very close to the republican and democratic principles, and that would be the cause of a number of disagreements with his hierarchy and the middle class in the Hazebrouck region. He sat in the centre left of the National Assembly.

His political work is very significant and contributed to improving the lives and conditions of workers and child labour.

He proposed and voted for a number of social laws:



1) Gemeinschaft junger Leuten, die Kranke, Arme und von der Gesellschaft Ausgeschlossene mit Gutscheinen für Brot oder Kohle versorgen

**Jules Lemire,
Mayor of Hazebrouck**

When he was elected mayor in 1914, his town was in the throes of the Great War and he was confronted by a number of problems with day-to-day difficulties. The Allotments that he created in 1896 allowed the citizens to survive the period of scarcity.

During his successive mandates as mayor he was particularly involved in housing, health and education.

Housing:

- He supported the Sociétés de Constructions Ouvrières (Societies for building houses for workers)
- He supported the Crédit Immobilier (mortgage market)
- He supported Hazebrouck's society of Habitation à Bon Marché (Low Cost Housing), predecessor to the HLM

Health:

- He had a Hospital/Hospice built
- He had a maternity ward built to help pregnant women to rest in good surroundings,
- He created baby counselling, the precursor of the centres for mother and child care

Education:

- He opened a foundation for the education and professional training of young women

His innovations and actions in the areas of housing, health and education were revolutionary, the work of an enlightened visionary, very aware of all of the social issues of his era. A number of his innovations have travelled through the 20th century and still exist nowadays.

I will finish by quoting several strong thoughts of the founder of the International Office and the Ligue du Coin de Terre et du Foyer, other institutions that have stood the test of time:

- *"The earth is the means, the family is the goal."*
- *"Whether man gains wine or bread, herbs or fruit from his land, it doesn't matter much to me: I only want him to always gain pride and freedom from it."*
- *The garden, when it is alone, easily becomes absorbing, it becomes a passion. It is small like everything that is enclosed. I want this plot of land to be mine, but I want something else: I want space and infinity."*



Germany: The function of the allotments as urban green areas

Peter Paschke, president of the German allotment federation



The importance of urban green areas is more and more recognized. This also gives us the opportunity to draw the attention of the public on the importance of allotments.

However we have to acknowledge that urban green areas, under whichever form, are increasingly facing the competition from growing towns and urban centres.

In fact, particularly when the population is increasing, the urban green areas are often in competition with the necessity to build more houses. The conflict concerning the use of these grounds is often associated with a tense financial situation. Often the costs for maintaining and acquiring green areas are among the first expenses to be cancelled.

Therefore there is one conclusion: Individual green areas, and I believe that this is true for all green spaces and not only for allotments, can only continue to exist in a long term if one succeeds to prove in each individual

case its highly added value for the whole society.

Therefore, the German allotment federation has already been underlining for many years the function of the allotments as public green areas.

The principle that the allotments are useful for everybody i.e. for the people living in the neighbouring areas, who are not member of the association, is proved by the numerous projects initiated by the allotment gardeners. These projects range from the cooperation with nurseries and schools to gardens for refugees. The allotments thus constitute an indispensable element of a social town. For us it is clear that the time, where the allotment gardeners could work hidden behind a thick hedge has been over for a long time.

A potential added value that modern and open allotment gardens could offer to the communes and its inhabitants could be described as follows: open allotment garden sites offer to

the communes, its inhabitants and the allotment gardeners the advantage that they can be used by all.





The communes are the beneficiaries of high quality green spaces, which constitute nearby relaxation areas accessible for all the inhabitants of the city.

For the communes these high quality green spaces do give rise to only low maintenance costs because the allotment gardeners liberate the communes from the maintenance of the plots and the common green spaces and thus discharge the commune of these financial burdens. Yes, and due to the payment of the rent the allotment gardeners even contribute to the financing of these quality green spaces.

The possibility offered to the communes to associate the use of the

allotments and the financial advantages is today still not highlighted enough. This would in fact enable the towns to propose high qualitative green spaces to their population despite financial difficulties.

If in addition to all this, the association puts plots at the disposal for projects enabling a cooperation with social infrastructures of the neighbourhood as for examples nurseries or schools, then an additional win-win situation is created. Numerous practical examples can already be quoted.

Many allotment associations could even get more active in the communal life! However, we think that the communal authorities also have the obligation to use the potential offered

by the numerous allotment associations. Sometimes one has the impression that communal authorities provide grounds and infrastructures for new garden projects under great financial efforts, whereas the potential of existing small allotment associations is not fully exploited. The communal authorities should not forget that allotment associations are certainly the most sustainable form of urban gardening and probably as well in a long term the less expensive one.

France: Permaculture

Hervé Bonnavaud



Permaculture is in vogue today. Is it a universal remedy? What are its advantages? Can it replace all the other cultivation methods used up today?

A historical overview

Permaculture is a movement which was created in Australia in the 1970th at the initiative of Dr Bill Mollison, teacher at the Tasmanian University, and his scholar David Holmgren. Starting from the acknowledgment that the conventional agriculture was a great consumer of energy and destroyed soil and ecosystems, they searched for a more economical method, more respectful of nature and nevertheless allowing the nutritional self-sufficiency.

The term permaculture is the contraction of the English expression “permanent agriculture” a form of agriculture which does not exhaust the soil and which can continue for a long period while allowing evolutions.

The researchers got also inspired by the work of Masanoku Fukuoka, a Japanese farmer who applied a “natural agriculture” on his farm based on the idea that one has to work with nature and not against it (Taoist concept).

A philosophy

Permaculture is more than a cultivation method; it is also a philosophy, a global way of acting based on 3 pillars:

- To take care of the soil,
- To take care of humans,
- To equitably share the resources and the harvest.

The necessary energetic transition

The problems linked to the exhaustion of the natural resources and the necessity to consider an energetic transition placed this cultivation method in people’s focus.

The permaculture was quickly adopted in the Anglo-Saxon countries and crossed the Channel with a delay of 10 to 15 years.

So, some of our English colleagues have already been applying permaculture for more or less 10 years. In 2010, during a seminar of the International Office we had the occasion to visit a site in Coventry, where this gardening technique was presented in parallel to other organic techniques.



What is permaculture?

Permaculture, according to its inventor, is based on 12 simple principles:

1. **Observe and interact:** our actions have to be adapted to every situation;
2. **Collect and stock energy:** collect rainwater;
3. **Create a production:** The aim in the garden is to reach a maximal productivity and efficiency;
4. **Apply a self-regulation and accept feedback:** Act in a way that problems are solved by themselves. Rainwater only exists in a limited quantity, therefore you have to economize it;
5. **Use and increase the value of renewable resources and services:** Use all the free of cost services provided by nature (water, wood, organic material, shadow, sun ...);
6. **Do not produce waste:** it has to be recycled. Care for your equipments in order to make them last as long as possible;
7. **Start from the global in order to reach the detail:** in the garden one has to try to create ecosystems;
8. **Integrate instead of separating:** privilege cooperation instead of competition while bringing together complementary elements. They can help each other;
9. **Apply solutions on a small level with patience. To cultivate one's own vegetables is a means to avoid wasting;**
10. **Use and valorise diversity:** Diversity is less vulnerable, more resistant to illnesses, climate change ...;
11. **Use the interfaces and valorise the border elements:** One can reach a better productivity while increasing the interface between the cultivation area and a hedge or a pool;
12. **Use changes and react in a creative way:** you have to accompany changes and not simply suffer them in order to be capa-



ble to satisfy one's need without exceeding the ecological limits.

“Permaculture” is a new concept of the garden, which bases on a global vision. The basis is the comprehension of the functioning of nature. A certain number of its principles are included in the charter “gardening and environment” of the French allotment federation and are regularly quoted in the gardening advice published in its magazine.

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