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News from the Office

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

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It was „terrific“

Dominique PETEUL

President of the International Office
President of the French federation



Dominique Peteul

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

As new president of the International Office, I would like first of all to thank the Austrian federation for this congress we shared together.

Wilhelm Wohatschek, the president of Austrian federation had a very great idea to celebrate two anniversaries, the ninety years of the International Office and the 100 years of Austrian Federation together: both anniversaries strongly light each other in their importance. So we got two anniversaries in one event and it was „terrific“.

Everybody appreciated the quality of the different lectures as well as all the discussions we had during this congress, during workshops and other events.

Wilhelm Wohatschek enabled us to better understand what other countries are living, with their differences and all we have in common demonstrating again that we can work together.

The program of activities and festivities were fabulous and I am sure that everybody invited to the Congress is now planning to come back to better explore Vienna!

I really understand all the efforts necessary to make this congress a great success and I particularly appreciate the warmth the Austrian federation welcomed us with.

Kudos for this great job!

Now you are invited to come to our 39th international Congress, to be held in Gradignan in the Bordeaux area as it is the turn of the French federation to prepare the 2019 Congress.

Due to its history, its gastronomy and its wines, Bordeaux is an area as rich as Lyon, where we had the pleasure to welcome you last time in 2005.

For our work, France is proposing to discuss the following subject: the soil, in all its aspects by focusing on 2 axes: soil legislation on one hand, and the good soil composition on the other hand.

In our future evolution, our planet will have more and more inhabitants, and the soil will be more and more farmed and used. To own a private garden will be a luxury and soil repartition will be a stronger and stronger societal issue, between agriculture and urbanization, between private and shared property, between nature and concrete. In this global frame, where should we place our gardens and our gardeners? How can we cooperate with policymakers in our countries to set fair and sustainable policies in order to create and to protect our allotment gardens?

Nations are growing closer, as Internet, travels and culture bring people together in their way of life and in their way of thinking. Father Lemire's ideas find a new revival in more and more countries.

Shall we only welcome and help newcomers in our structure? Or shall

we also build and promote a new fair and sustainable model for collective gardens? A model that would allow future generations to have the freedom to grow a garden as they wish?

As you can see, soil legislation is a comprehensive topic and seems to be as important as soil quality to grow flowers and vegetables.

In France for instance, arable land is carefully removed before building and is treated thereafter as a waste. There is no norm nor any indication to guarantee its value. Consequently it is the "mud spreading" legislation that applies. Shall we let it go? Can we give the point of view of our federations and of our gardeners? Following which criteria? Can we and our gardeners ask for a minimum quality of arable land? How can we know how full of life a soil is? Urban agriculture is now becoming a trendy topic: shall we turn to hydroponic farming, in caves with artificial light? Will we grow our carrots like we breed our chicken in batteries?

Elsewhere legislation is made to norm the part of parkland authorized or necessary in towns. Our allotment gardens shouldn't they be considered by public authorities as part of the parklands?

There are a lot of questions the future will have to answer, with or without us! Voltaire, the Lumières philosopher, assures in his philosophical tale *Candide*: "Let us cultivate our garden!" That should not prevent us from asking ourselves the good questions and from trying to answer them the best we can, taking into account our allotment gardens and their gardeners and the values they share.

Yes, allotment gardens are a possible and valid answer to future challenges! Yes, we must get together, scientists, gardeners and federations to adapt and make our gardens evolve in this way!

In order to prepare these topics but also in our general work in the Office, we need to think together, to work to-

gether. We need to exchange ideas and to know about the experiences made in every federation. Only like that we will be strong.

We all are a part of the Office and we must act together to save our allotments for the future generations. It was the way Hervé Bonnavaud walked, whom I replaced suddenly at the beginning of this last summer. You know him well as he worked for a long time for the Office. Unfortunately, due to sickness, Hervé had to stop suddenly all his activities. Like us, in the French Federation, you could appreciate this man with his qualities, his expertise and all the energy he knew how to harness in order to build a better world. It is this spirit I wish to keep as mine.

Resolution of the XXXVIIIth Congress of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux in Vienna from 17th – 20th August, 2016

The expert advice of the future considering sustainability and responsible resource management

The responsibility of allotment gardeners towards future generations and the ecological conservation of the ground put at the disposal

The delegates of 2,000,000 allotment families from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland acknowledged that:

Already two decades ago, their allotment garden federations recognized the need to pay more attention to a more active nature protection. The Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux has developed a number of projects over the past years, such as „Organic Gardening“, „Ecological Gardening“ and the „Soil Analyses“ in an effort to make individual allotment gardeners aware of these issues.

The use of expert advice is one of the most important cornerstones of the federations' work, carried out within all allotment garden associations.

Expert gardening advisers in fruit growing and horticulture have been working in individual allotment associations to implement projects and to pass on their knowledge to individual gardeners. They educate not only the associations' members, but often also people within the communities. Their activity thus has significant relevance beyond garden borders.

At the same time there is a high demand for their level of expertise: not just background knowledge, but up-to-date skills are required. A high level and up-to-date specialist competence is rightly expected of expert advisers. Social competence, learning skills and methodological expertise are sought after. The ability to focus on people while taking into consideration differing levels of knowledge as well as individual preferences and needs is a challenging task.

In several national federations, people can obtain a diploma as „certified

gardening advisers“ after successfully completing the appropriate coursework.

The delegates underline that:

the Office intends to create a network, that all gardening advisers of the national federations can use, to access the latest information and we strive also to provide assistance in the training of new consultants.

Nature protection alone is no longer sufficient in these times; we must focus more attention on the issues of environmental protection on the al-



lotments. Allotment gardeners in the national federations must develop a sense of responsibility for the ground and land put at their disposal. Gardening advisers must therefore also be mobilized for other future tasks. They must in fact accompany the allotment gardeners to reach this aim.

This 2016 Congress has addressed the topics of „The responsibility of allotment holders towards future generations with respect to the environmental conservation of ground and land allotted to them“ and, subsequently, „Expert advice of the future considering sustainability and responsible use of resources“ in a very professional and detailed manner.

Sustainable gardening is a new awareness. Expert advises given by the national federations must therefore place even greater emphasis on this subject. It is about inspiring allotment gardeners to challenge their thinking, their actions and their consumer behaviour, to question what they are doing with their garden and the effects of their gardening-related consumption. Those who focus on protecting local wildlife and biological diversity when gardening will increasingly be asking themselves: what impact do my gardening actions have on resources, the environment and nature?

During the discussions the delegates agreed that:

besides current subjects like pest management and organic gardening, issues concerning

- sewage disposal, protection of groundwater, economical use of water,
- waste separation and waste prevention,
- preservation of green spaces in urban areas to ensure good air quality, must also be addressed.

Awareness must therefore be raised among the allotment gardeners of how their actions and concrete steps contribute not only to safeguarding the art of gardening as a cultural heritage, but also to protecting the environment, nature and its many species.

For this reason it was decided that:

the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux should work out a new module for expert gardening advisers.

It should deal with “advanced training measures considering sustainability” in addition to the existing training policies. This module should be formulated in such a way that it can be adapted according to the different national necessities.

The delegates also agreed on the necessity to have and integrate new allotment gardeners into the existing allotment community. Also in this area expert gardening advisers bring a precious contribution by giving the new allotment gardeners the necessary information.

As a conclusion the delegates of the member federations agree that it is a long term aim to realize the networking of the national expert garden advisers on an international level. They are absolutely convinced that an international network of expert advisers will have a positive influence on the whole allotment movement.

signed
Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK
President

Malou WEIRICH
Secretary general



Retrospective in pictures



RETROSPECTIVE IN PICTURES FROM THE 38TH CONGRESS



The market town Feldkirchen near Graz (A) received the diploma for social activities



Welcome to Feldkirchen near Graz

Feldkirchen is located in the Greater Graz area in Styria, in the south of Austria. As a suburban municipality of Graz, the second biggest city of Austria, where all cultural opportunities and many facets of urban life are being offered, Feldkirchen is constantly challenged to be more to the locals than a village bounded by the Mur and the airport, a mere transit point on the north-south axis, sandwiched between the Triester Straße and the railway, with the southern motorway as an east-west dividing line.

While other cities and municipalities burden their citizens with increasing taxes and charges, the market town of Feldkirchen gives strong social support to its residents by furthering local associations on different levels. Whereas it is common practice for many communes to financially promote their sports clubs, Feldkirchen traditionally also fosters its good relationship with the allotment garden association.

After the Second World War, in 1946, Franz Saringer, the founding president of the allotment garden association of Feldkirchen, suggested the commune to make parts of the dormant land of the former mill of Warnhaus available to families from Feldkirchen for cultivation purposes. The commune agreed because food was scarce in the post-war period and families without any land or property would thus get the opportunity to grow their own vegetables.

In March 1955, a general lease agreement with the regional allotment garden association of Styria was signed. The yearly rent for the whole allotment garden area amounted to 2500 shillings, e.g. 180 euros. The duration was initially limited to 10 years, but it was regularly extended until the allotment garden association Feldkirchen finally became a permanent garden area in 1976. A yearly rent of 6000 shillings, about 440 euros, was agreed upon.

Over the decades, the market town

Feldkirchen continued to financially support the allotment garden association, as the small membership fees were not sufficient to provide the necessary infrastructure. In addition to member contributions and many donations from different companies, the commune promoted the construction of the clubhouse. It was agreed that the rents for the plots paid by the members should directly benefit the association to ensure its financial survival. Furthermore, the allotment garden association receives a yearly basic financial support from the commune. Consequently, the members only pay a fraction of the costs they would have to pay in another allotment garden association.

Social life in Feldkirchen remains intact. In return, the allotment garden association and many other associations naturally take part in the different events and activities offered by the commune. They participate in the spring-cleaning as well as in the organisation of the cycle touring day in spring, with about 300 participants,



and of the traditional walking day on the national holiday in autumn.

During the Advent season, the commune's cultural centre with its 24 windows is turned into a gigantic, colourful advent calendar by some of the 40 associations and organisations. The allotment garden association has chosen motifs created by Marc Chagall for its window.



As a thank you for their collaboration and as a token of appreciation, the commune invites the representatives to diverse celebrations or receptions, such as the Premiere of the Passion Plays, which take place every four years in Feldkirchen.



It is particularly convenient that, some years ago, the commune bought the Feldkirchenerhof and makes the facilities available for free to the associations. Thus, the allotment garden association found an adequate venue for its annual general assembly.



Twice a year, the commune invites the associations' representatives to the Feldkirchenerhof. Information about current topics and trainings for important matters such as hygiene or association law, as well as the agreement on event dates, are central subjects of this meeting. This meeting facilitates the exchange between associations and opens new ways of cooperation.



In 2012, the market place was redesigned into a "shared space". The parking lot became an attractive public space, ideally suited to host various cultural activities and events.

For a couple of years, a Christmas market has been organised there on Sundays of Advent. The commune provides the infrastructure for free while the associations organise sales stalls and the framework programme. This new place of contemplation and community is very popular with the allotment garden association.

The Generations Park initiated in spring 2014 is a playground and meeting point for all age groups and turned out to be a huge success.

This is just a brief selection of the myriad of activities that are organised in this area. The new Mayor, Eric Gosch, follows in the footsteps of the former mayor, Adolf Pellischek, thus enabling Feldkirchen to emerge from the shadows of Graz and represent a lively, attractive home and workplace for the local people, with an intact community and high living standards.

The Moseley and District Allotment Holders Association Ltd, Birmingham (GB) received the diploma for an ecological gardening



A hidden gem in the centre of England's second city

Hidden in Moseley, an urban village in south Birmingham, is an amazing oasis - the lungs of the City; around 250 allotment and leisure gardens enthusiastically nurtured by plot holders. What a gem the City has just three miles from the centre and what a haven for urban wildlife and city gardeners to share! Moseley and District Allotment Holders Association Limited (MaDAHAL), known

locally as Moor Green allotments, began life as a redeveloped site in 1976 and in 2014. It was in 1976 that Birmingham City Council hosted an international conference* launching the Thorpe report on the future of allotment gardening in Britain. Some pictures of the congress and opening of the site are added to this comment. Moor Green Farm and Russell Road allotments, which had existed side by side for many years previously, were redeveloped into a new

site and opened as MaDAHAL by the then Princess Alice of Gloucester on 8 September 1976. Hence 2016 is an important year for MaDAHAL as we celebrate 40 years of allotment gardening on the site.

In addition to our Annual Produce Show, we are celebrating big time! Currently we are planning several commemorative edible beds around the site, we're capturing 'talking heads' videos for our website, adding a new section to our Show on poetry, photography and artistry inspired by allotment gardening and commissioning a booklet and calendar, working in partnership with Moseley History Society. But the highlight of the year will be on 3 September when plot holders and social members come together to celebrate and reward the 'fruits' of a years' hard work!

Inevitably, as the demographic and usage has demanded, the site has evolved and is now one of the most diverse allotments associations in the City. In 2014, as council austerity measures started to take hold we took over greater responsibilities for the day to day running of the site under the new management agreement with Birmingham City Council and with the support of the whole allotment community much as been achieved.



The revival of organic gardening and the need for greater self-sufficiency has resulted in a huge increase in demand. MaDAHAL has responded by encouraging inexperienced plot holders to take on half plots. Thoughtfully planned this can yield a novice gardener a good supply of fruit and vegetables throughout the year. Young families and retired gardeners alike recognise that from plot to plate is not only healthier, but gets them out in the fresh air and provides regular exercise.

MaDAHAL is fortunate to have a thriving licensed Pavilion, also enjoyed by social members. What could be better after a warm day working the plot than to drop into the Pavilion, have a drink and discuss gardening and other matters with kindred spirits? It is also the only allotment site in the City to have solar panels on the Pavilion roof and watering harvesting systems on eighty percent of plots. Ever mindful of our eco systems the Association has cultivated a bee meadow, in partnership with Friends of the Earth, to support and protect the increasing number of hives on site. Another area, mainly wooded, nurtures a colony of stag beetles, a species protected under The Wildlife & Countryside Act. And whilst not always welcome by plot holders, a cete of badgers frequently visit the site helping themselves, in particular, to root crops. Birdlife thrives at the allotment site, with some 40 different species identified, including green and great spotted woodpeckers, tawny owls, chiffchaff, black cap, long tailed, coal, blue and great tits, green, gold and chaff finches and various raptors on the look-out for a tasty morsel!

For more information visit our website www.moorgreenallotments.co.uk

*The international conference mentioned was the 20th congress of the International Office. We celebrated in Birmingham the Office's 50th anniversary



and the English federation offered the Office at that occasion the presidential chain. The Harry Thorpe report planned to integrate allotments in the green belts of the cities. Unfortunately Harry Thorpe passed away some months later and his future orientated ideas had no practical effect at that time. Some pictures of the congress opening ceremony and of the inauguration of the site are joined as appendix. *Malou WEIRICH*

The allotment association “ATV Zonnegaarde” (NL) received the diploma for an ecological gardening



The park

In 1969, “ATV Zonnegaarde” was founded; it was located on the outskirts of The Hague. Nowadays, the expanding city of The Hague is incorporating the allotment park in what the city council wants to become ‘the most ecological district in The Netherlands.’ The park measures 3.6 ha and is situated on one of the ecological strips of land connecting the larger green areas of the city of The Hague and those of its suburbs. Those strips are part of the national ecological network (Ecologische hoofdstructuur, EHS, ‘Main ecological structure’).

“Zonnegaarde” first applied for the Dutch hallmark of organic (i.e., ‘ecological’) gardening in 2010, which resulted in a 3 spot qualification and then in 2011 in a 4 spot qualification

(i.e., highest) in 2015. Though the park does not have a lot of public green, we succeeded to make the most of its possibilities in several projects. Some 15% of the members are actively involved in the maintenance of the projects, although many others support the principles of organic gardening.

Several members of “Zonnegaarde” are members of acknowledged nature conservation societies like KNNV (Royal Society for Natural History), IVN (Society for Nature Education) and of the The Hague society for the protection of birds. Some of them are qualified IVN nature guides as well, so there’s a lot of knowledge available on species and nature protection and conservation. It also results in a close co-operation with the said organizations.

The achievements so far are:

- Monitoring animal and plant life. Knowledge of natural life in the park is essential for its protection. Birds have been monitored since 2004. The common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), the great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*) and the green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*) are spotted regularly. Monitoring animal and plant life may also show the results of climate change, even on the small scale of the park.
- Taking nature outside the park. In co-operation with the council of The Hague an area adjacent to the garden park will be sown (2016) with indigenous flowering plants to show nature’s beauty to neighbours and to invite them to visit the park.
- Maximizing results in an econ-

omizing way by re-using and recycling materials, for instance using cut twigs and branches to make dead hedges or bird shelters. Garden waste is collected to be composted. Used bricks have been used in all kinds of piles and walls for amphibians and insects. Other nature gardens sometimes donate seeds or plants. In return, a surplus of plants from our projects can be donated to interested parties. The choice of plants (indigenous ones if possible) is tailored to local conditions, such as the clay soil.

- Creating different biotopes in the park:
 1. a swamp area connected to the watercourse surrounding the park. It is highly appreciated by amphibians and water birds. It has considerable ecological values; plants like common marshmallow (*Althea officinalis*), flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), common chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) and heath spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata ssp. maculata*) are found here;
 2. the breeding-pool for amphibians offers a rather vast variety of indigenous plants, some of which appeared spontaneously;
 3. planned mowing and ecological conservation of the large lawn provided opportunities to wild flowers to establish themselves permanently;
 4. under a couple of high deciduous trees there is a shady garden containing ferns as well as bulbs that bloom early on in spring. By the time the trees have developed their foliage, the bulbous plants will have disappeared and wait for the next spring;
 5. there is a bee field containing four bee hives, owned by two bee keepers. It is equipped with a shed to store the bee keepers' implements. The bee field is entirely laid out for honeybees, solitary bees and insects in

general. Throughout the growing-season flowering plants are available. Noticeable species like leafcutter bees, including the European wool carder bee (*Anthidium manicatum*), and a lot of hoverfly species (*Syrphidae*) are found here;

6. adjoining the bee field there is a quiet area for birds, which has been provided with some nesting-boxes, too. This part of the park is left alone as much as possible;
7. the tree bark and wood chip covered nature trail turned into an eldorado for fungi. Nameplates on trees and next to plants increase its educational capacity;
8. there is a small trail underneath bent willow branches overgrown by bramble, where one can walk in the shade. We consider this bramble tunnel a creative but unfortunately only local way to make a constructive use of a troublesome shrub like bramble;
9. a sundial/flower clock shows the flowers' own rhythm of opening and closing, scenting and offering nectar;
10. there is a border laid out with scenting herbs. It has been built on a raised level to make it easily accessible to wheelchair users;
11. a public botanical/educational garden owned by one of the members is under construction.

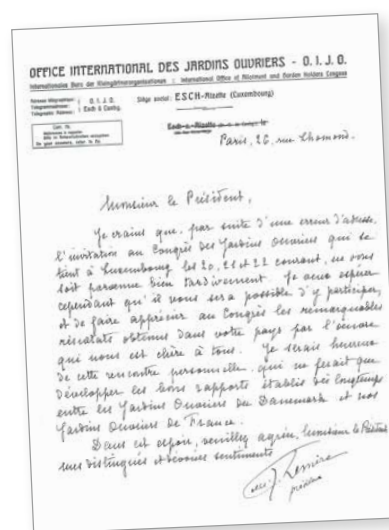
- The different areas, like the butterfly garden, the breeding pool for amphibians or the swamp area make it possible to draw special attention to certain groups of animals or plants.
- "Zonnegaarde" always tries to take part in national projects like the garden bird count, soil fauna day or butterfly count brought to the attention of the general public by the radio and television programme Vroege Vogels ('Early Birds'), which is specialized in matters of nature conservation

and environment.

- Activity centre Sparring, offering day care to physically handicapped people and to people suffering from non-congenital brain damage, owns an allotment in the park, where their clients can perform gardening if they are able to do so. Other clients may just find a bit of peace there or have social contacts with other gardeners. In this way, "Zonnegaarde" also participates in social activities of and for handicapped people in its part of town.

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

Part II Malou WEIRICH



Foundation of the Office International *

a) The precursors of the Office International

The origins of the international allotment movement arose from the first congress of the French allotment federation in Paris in 1903. Alongside a number of French attendees were representatives from Belgium, Holland, Germany and Switzerland. Alwin Bielefeld from Berlin presided over the third congress session.

The following congress in Paris in 1906 had the same international flavour. Father Lemire, president of the French federation, was happy to welcome delegates from Germany, Belgium, Italy and Holland.

In 1907, French delegates visited the Red Cross worker gardens in Charlottenburg (Germany).

In 1910, a number of delegates from Germany, Holland and France responded to an invitation from Belgium to attend the allotment congress in Brussels.

Due to the start of the First World War, the planned congress for 1914 in Berlin didn't take place.

Thomas Shaw, president of the allotment movement in Ireland, suggested an international allotment movement at the 1922 congress in Birmingham.

Straight after its foundation in 1924, Luxembourg's federation made contact with both the German speaking and the French speaking federations. In Anvers, the delegates from Luxembourg agreed in principle with D.C. Collins from London and the delegates from Belgium and France regarding the proposal of an international union.

In 1925, Joseph Reissberger proposed this same idea in Vienna, and A. Dalskow from Denmark wrote a letter about the same topic to H. Förster from Germany.

Over the course of various lectures made in Switzerland and Luxembourg, H. Förster noticed that the organisations in these two countries were admirably predisposed to collaborate in an international union of allotment gardens.

In spring 1926, the president of the Luxembourgish federation went to Paris to talk to Father Lemire about creating an international union. A conference was planned for 1926 in Luxembourg.

On the 27th of April 1926, D.C. Collins, president of the British allotment federation, sent the Belgian, French and Luxembourgish federations a circular asking them to confirm be-

* Summary of the booklet about the foundation of the Office International. Reprint of the original booklet at the occasion of the Office's 75th anniversary by the German allotment federation (president Ingo Kleist) in cooperation with the "Kuratorium des Fördervereins Deutsches Kleingärtnermuseum in Leipzig e.v.

fore the 22nd of May their intention to collaborate and create an international union. In agreement with D. C. Collins, a copy was sent by H. Förster to the federations of Austria, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany.

On the 19th of June 1926, at the British allotment congress in Sheffield, H. Förster and D.C. Collins agreed to proceed with the project.

On the 15th of July, a letter was sent to the federations of Germany, America, England, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Scotland, Finland, France, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland with proposed date, location and agenda for a preliminary conference with a view to creating an international union of allotment gardens.

Ten of the federations contacted responded before the 1st of August. All of the replies confirmed the opportunity to create an international union, and the choice was made to have Luxembourg as the headquarters.

A new circular on the 19th of August announced the final date as 3rd of October, and the Luxembourg federation was made responsible for organising the meeting. On the 10th of September, the invitations were sent out in German, English and French to the national organisations, containing all of the necessary information.

The agenda was as follows:

Saturday, 2nd of October

08.00 p.m.: delegates meet at the Central hotel

Sunday, 3rd of October

09.00 a.m.: Delegate work group at the Cercle Municipal

11.00 a.m.: Government and town council reception

11.30 a.m.: Concert by the military band

03.00 p.m.: Public lecture by Father Lemire on the social purpose of allotments

07.00 p.m.: Official banquet

Monday, 4th of October

Coach trip: Visit to Esch-sur-Alzette and its factories; visit to Dudelange and its social projects

The invited federations were Germany, England, America, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Scotland, France, Finland, Holland, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Poland, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia.

The following federations took part in the founding meeting of the Office and therefore became founding members: Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

It was noted that all of the federations had the same problems: legal protection and promotion of allotments, training member gardeners and propaganda to continue developing the movement.

b) Foundation of the Office International

The founding members of the Office International noted that:

- 1) the term "allotment" had varied meanings: it was important to specify the term;
- 2) general experience showed that national federations are necessary to promote allotments. Only they are qualified to represent them in front of national governments, town councils and public opinion;
- 3) whatever was the starting point for the national allotment garden movement here and there, the movement existed with a common goal and therefore justified a common activity;
- 4) the fact that isolated efforts in each country were falling short called for an international union able to achieve global results;
- 5) during the war, legal measures had been taken to protect allot-

ments. Some of them remained in force and there was everywhere a favourable relationship with the authorities regarding allotments;

- 6) the federations unanimously demanded that everywhere a useful legislation for allotments be adopted and that sufficient land be protected in order to allow the development of allotment gardens."

During the preparatory meetings for the foundation of the Office International, the constitutional measures were discussed.

a) What is the objective of the union to be created?

The union's goal is to promote allotments.

But what does the term allotment mean? An allotment is defined as a benefit institution or some kind of association that makes a garden available to a worker who doesn't have one, a garden that he has to cultivate himself for his own needs and those of his family.

b) Which federations can become members of the International Union?

The founding members decide that only national federations of allotment gardens can become direct members of the union. The local associations are represented in this union by the national federations.

Allotments vary from country to country and correspond to local requirements. Due to its size, a national federation is better qualified to represent all the allotment associations.

c) What is the name of the union to be created?

Different names were suggested. It is considered advantageous to choose a term that has an equivalent in the various languages. However, the English delegates insisted on choosing the name "Office". Indeed,

this name is already used by other similar institutions and gives the best idea of an organisation that provides services.

This name is agreed unanimously. The organisation to be created will have the name "Office International des Jardins Ouvriers" (International Office of Allotment and Garden Holders Leagues)

d) Headquarters of the Office

Despite the fact that the first idea to create allotment gardens came from Belgium, that the propaganda movement to promote allotments was particularly prominent in France, and that this organisation had developed in a remarkably methodical way in Germany, the delegates unanimously agreed that the headquarters of the Office should be in Luxembourg.

There were many reasons behind that decision:

1. Luxembourg is a neutral country
2. Its central location at the heart of Europe allows it to easily build links with all parties concerned
3. The Grand Duchy has the most beautiful roses in the world
4. Luxembourg is a country with both a very developed horticulture and a strong industrial life. Allotments are more appreciated and necessary here than elsewhere.
5. Another important factor is the strong support of the government of Luxembourg.

e) Services of the Office

- The Office must establish constant contact between the national federations.
- It must gather all of the documentation regarding allotment gardens (regulations, reviews, newsletters, legal or administrative documents etc) and make them available to all parties. If needed, it should put those concerned in touch with the authors.
- The Office must publish an annual report on the worker garden conditions in three languages: French, German and English.
- It must prepare the regular meeting of international conferences.

f) Management of the Office

The Office will be managed by a committee, on which each member federation will have a representative, and that committee must meet once a year.

This committee is immediately in force: Father Lemire will be president of the Office. The attendees elect Joseph Gomaere (Belgium), Heinrich Förster (Germany) and John Robson (England) as vice presidents. François Flick from the Luxembourgish federation takes the position of secretary-treasurer. Joseph Reissberger is designated representative for Austria and Jakob Meier as representative for Switzerland.

g) Resources of the Office

It is proposed that each federation contributes to the charges of the Office according to the number of its members. However, it is difficult to

determine what should be considered a member. It is also noted that it is difficult to find a basis that is acceptable to all federations.

Furthermore, these contributions would essentially vary and would not allow a stable and secure provisional budget to be established.

It is therefore preferable to the founders to set the contributions at a lump sum. This amount should be lower for small federations and higher for large ones. The founders hope that in addition to these charges, the governments will support the Office financially and that the latter will also receive donations from individuals.

h) Next meeting

It is decided that the next meetings will take place in Luxembourg in 1927 and then in Germany in 1929.

To be continued.

Services offered by the Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e.V.

Peter Paschke, president of the German allotment federation



The Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e.V. (BDG, Central Federation of Allotment Gardens) is the national representative of allotment gardens in Germany.

The BDG and its 20 regional member federations provide the necessary framework for allotment gardens to exist in Germany.

The 20 regional federations include more than 14,800 allotment garden associations, so that 940,000 members get the possibility for gardening activities in their spare time. We have a total area of 45,000 hectares. The average size of each garden is 370m². These allotment gardens are grouped together on allotment garden sites and have various communal equipments, which can be used by gardeners and visitors to the site.

75% of the allotment garden associations have their own associative building and the majority of them also offer catering.

In 49% of the allotment garden associations, there are areas for the children of allotment gardeners to play, but also for children of local nurseries and schools, who often come to the site.

Since the 1st of April 1983, German allotment gardens can rely on the German state law on allotment gardens (BKleingG) which has set a legal framework for their use. In essence it is a law protecting gardeners of allotment gardens. Before 1983, there were various regional regulations concerning allotment gardens at a Länder level, which were harmonised at a national level with the BKleingG. After the reunification of

Germany, the unification treaty also looked at the old GDR regulations concerning allotment gardens, and it entered them into the BKleingG law with effect from the 3rd of October 1990. In 1994, this law was adapted and articles 5 and 20a were rewritten or added.

The clauses on protection are:

- Setting the lease cost – article 5
 - Clauses relating to cancelling a lease – article 9
 - Compensation relating to cancellation – article 11
 - Making alternative land available – article 14
 - Transitory clauses – articles 16, 17 and 18
 - Clauses relating to the protection of existing sites – article 20a
- Gardeners can therefore use their allotment garden for an indeterminate length of time.



The conditions of use of gardens have also been regulated. Our gardeners must therefore dedicate at least one third of the garden's area for growing horticultural produce intended for their own consumption (fruit and vegetables).

Naturally, there are also situations limiting use, notably for:

- Plots larger than 400 m²
- Certain land types in allotment gardens, e.g. hills, mountains
- Where the soil quality limits use, e.g. polluted land

To meet the purpose of public utility, our gardens are available to the public. Numerous projects organised by the allotment garden community aim to address topics linked to current society concerns and are put into action as projects in the allotment garden associations.

We therefore focus on social projects, like educating children and teenagers about nature and the environment, helping elderly people, and creating gardens for the disabled or therapeutic gardens.

However, projects focusing specifically on the environment are equally important, such as thematic gardens that allow continuous training for our gardeners, and discovery gardens about bees in order to train young beekeepers.

Educational trails around nature and biotopes are also part of the appealing projects organised by our associations.

These services offered by our gardeners are our everyday contribution to society.

The national federation also proposes training activities for the officers of our federation. Each year, the allotment garden federation orga-



nises a training course from Friday to Sunday on the topics concerning environment, public relations and management, in order to form a wide range of officers. As for the topics of specialist gardening advice and legal regulations, two events are organised per year.

France: Collective gardens – new tendencies

Hervé Bonnavaud



Cesis (Latvia)

Gardening preceded agriculture. It was present on all continents. However, under the form of allotments, family gardens, community gardens ... that means organised in a collective way within associations, this kind of gardening could only be found in Western countries in the North of Europe and the United States of America. The appearance and development of these gardens was closely linked to the industrial revolution that provoked a large rural exodus and a great poverty among the working classes. Up to very recently there was no such gardening in the countries around the Mediterranean.

Due to the economic crisis and certain catastrophes, as well as the birth of an interest among the populations for healthier food (organic), groups of gardens have appeared nearly everywhere. You can find them now in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Israel and even New

Zealand following three earthquakes that have devastated the town of Christchurch in September 2010, February and June 2011. The creation of allotments allowed to quickly restart life in the centre of the town.

During the last two years meetings with researchers within the COST program have allowed me to visit groups of gardens in Portugal, Latvia, Cyprus and England. Additionally, numerous presentations have been made on gardens in other countries such as for example New Zealand, Israel, Canada, the United States, Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Greece, Malta...to name only these few that are not members of the International Office.

These meetings have been very enriching for our movement. We are five members of the International Office to participate in these meetings together with 120 researchers from 30 different nationalities.

The gardens in Riga (Latvia) and Birmingham (England) have a long history, but those of Lisbon (Portugal) and above all those of Nicosia (Cyprus) are very recent. Some of them are very close to our allotments while others are very different.

The evolution of the allotments in our neighbouring countries show that these gardens that were identical at their origin in the 19th century present today major differences: some of them have become leisure gardens where the vegetable cultivation has nearly totally disappeared to make space for flowers, trees and lawn and are often used as secondary residences.

This is the evolution one can note in certain countries where you find a tradition of allotments and family gardens. The nutritional function has much regressed. There are, however, some exemptions: This is so in France, England, Belgium and Luxembourg where food cultivation is still very important.

The new data

Among the newcomers, the situation is a little bit different because the context and the environment are no longer comparable to the situation that existed more than a century ago in the industrialized Europe.

- There is certainly still a crisis, but the unemployed people today probably live better than the workers in the mining industries in the 19th century.
- They were born above all in towns and have no background and no knowledge in agriculture.

- Building grounds have become very rare around towns.
- The new gardeners are concerned about their environment and the quality of the food they eat.

From these observations you can acknowledge the following tendencies:

- Priority is given to food gardens;
- One is looking for a multifunctionality of the gardens: vegetable production, meetings, education, solidarity, the welcoming of children, disabled people and the elderly;
- Community gardens normally serve as a model;
- The plots if they are not cared for in common, are generally very small;
- The garden sites are frequently created on public open spaces and the individual plots are no more fenced;
- The most important aim is a sustainable gardening: a gardening respectful of the environment where the use of pesticides is prohibited:

The allotments as we know them have, however, not totally disappeared. If those allotments are still created, they normally take into consideration all or part of these new tendencies.

The gardens in the Miraflores Parks in Seville (Spain)

You can describe these gardens as a site with individual plots of 100 sqm. Other plots are reserved for collective activities, specifically for children, the elderly and disabled people...

The Portuguese gardens of Lisbon

They are the result of a very strong political will of the Lisbon town authorities. They developed very quickly in order to comply with the needs of a population regrouping many unemployed people and in order to change the image of the town where public gardens and green belts, in



Riga (Latvia)



Lisbon (Portugal)

which the gardens have been embedded, occupy more and more space. The allotments are similar to our allotments: they offer plots of some tens of sqm at the bottom of blocks of flats. There are as well bigger plots (100 – 150 sqm) included in the green belts. The gardeners are organized in associations.

The Latvian gardens

The Latvian allotments have been profoundly marked by the Soviet period: Latvia was under Russian domination from 1940 until 1991. The Soviet regime put tens of thousands

of gardens at the disposal of the population at the outskirts of the towns. These allotment sites could unify from some hundreds of gardens up until two thousand plots on one site. The plots had between 200 and 300 sqm. They were easily accessible by common transport. Families were authorized to build a shed which was often furnished so as to spend a weekend there. The gardens were administrated by the communal authorities.

These gardens are today much threatened because they are badly



Nicosia (Cyprus)



Limasol (Cyprus)



Limasol (Cyprus)



Nicosia (Cyprus)

cared for, badly administrated and many plots are vacant. One has to say that the life standard has much improved and the population has seen an important demographic diminution. The town of Riga closed a great number of gardens and has reconstructed some more modern ones which are better inserted in the urban context.

In the town of Cesis, 80 kilometres east of Riga, we were able to visit more recent sites constructed in close vicinity of collective housing areas and elderly people's homes. The plots have a medium size, are open (not fenced) and are administrated by an association.

The gardens in Nicosia (Cyprus)

In Cyprus, a small island at the far east of the Mediterranean, divided between Turks and Greeks there is no tradition of allotment gardens. Since two or three years, groups of citizens, helped by young researchers, have started to create community gardens on extremely small spaces of land at the outskirts of Nicosia, where available grounds are very rare.

The first site we visited was situated on the grounds of the railway track that used to link the Greek part and the Turkish part, a few meters away from the separation line between the two communities in a sort of pathway planted on both sites with trees. You can find nearly no good earth there. The plots are shared and their creation has just started. They are extremely small.

The second site we visited is situated near a field with grass. It is larger, but it is very clear, while looking at the gardens, that the gardeners are beginners and have no idea about gardening. The local people explained us that the people in charge were very enthusiastic, but had only few competencies and had many difficulties to guide the gardeners.



Riga (Latvia)

Finland: Allotment gardening under the Midnight Sun

Tina Wessmann



The northernmost allotment garden of the world is situated at the latitude 66°, quite close to the Arctic Circle and the Santa Claus Village, in the city of Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland. Rovaniemi is a small city, with appr. 60 000 inhabitants, located where the rivers Kemijoki ja Ounasjoki meet and surrounded by forested hills.

A dream comes true

The birth of the allotment garden Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha dates back to the end of the 1990's. There was an ad in the local newspaper presenting the idea of an allotment garden in Rovaniemi. Some eager persons started working as organisers and looked for peers to join them in the project. The association Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarhayhdistys ry. was founded in 1999 and the next year the association became a member of the Federation of Finnish Allotment Gardens (Suomen Siirtolapuutarhaliitto).

A hard task was to find a suitable site for the allotment garden, but fi-

nally the association was pointed to a forested peatlandfield called Koulupelto. The location was good, since the area is situated only seven kilometres from the city centre. A challenge was though that the field is low-lying and therefore the danger of frost is high. The city of Rovaniemi and the allotment garden association made an agreement of lease in 2002.

The infrastructure of the site was built in 2002-2003. The new allotment garden got its first 8 cottages in 2004. Today the allotment garden consists of 24 parcels with cottages and a common cultivation area, which offers small plots to inhabitants of the city. There is an option for extending the allotment garden with 25 more cottages sometimes in the future.

The cottages are built of timber, a very suitable building material for the north location. All cottages have a fireplace, electricity, running water and sewerage, and almost all cottages also have a sauna. The allotment gardeners are allowed to stay in their

cottages almost around the year. The only exception is the months during midwinter.

The northern location offers peculiarities...

The allotment gardeners in southern Finland are usually very occupied with spring tasks when March turns to April. At that time of the year the allotment gardeners in Rovaniemi, 800 km north of the Finnish capital Helsinki, go on nice skiing trips to watch the snow slowly melt on their site, and make plans for cultivation during the season to come. According to long-term statistics Rovaniemi has, on average, permanent snow cover from mid-November to the beginning of May.

The Finnish gardening magazines reminds their readers of pruning trees and bushes in March-April. This timetable does not apply for Rovaniemi, because at that time of year especially all bushes are hidden under a meter of snow. There is though also something exquisite



with the loads of snow: it protects the plants from damages caused by the cold temperature.

The growing season is very short in Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha. Only in June-August the average daily temperature stays above 10°C. Pre-cultivation and using garden fabrics are necessities for getting a good harvest. Also greenhouses are used.

The summer is short, but it is full of light. Already in May the sun is in the sky for 19 hours a day and between June 6th and July 7th the sun does not set at all. The midnight sun is the best friend of an allotment gardener close to the Polar Circle. Due to much light and quite low temperatures the harvest gets a much deeper and richer taste. There is scientific evidence of that.

The neighbouring woods offer the allotment gardeners in Rovaniemi an

addition to the harvest from their own gardens. There is a lot of blueberries, cloudberries, lingonberries, cranberries and a variety of mushrooms to be picked. The air is very clean and clear due to minor traffic and industry in the area.

Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha is situated within the area of reindeer herding in northern Finland. Within this area the reindeers are allowed to pasture freely. Because of this, the allotment garden association had to build a reindeer fence. This was done in close cooperation with the local reindeer herding cooperative.

... and puts limits on gardening

Rovaniemi is located in the international plant hardiness zone 4 (Helsinki in southern Finland is zone 6). This restricts the selection of especially trees and bushes on the allotment site. Over the years the gardeners in Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha have

gained a lot of experience and knowledge of which plants do succeed that far up north, and this insight is happily handed over to new allotment gardeners.

In Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha seeding on open land can be done from the end of May to mid-June, depending on when spring arrives. The springtime is very short: when the snow has melted it is almost summer. On open land the allotment gardeners grow carrots, turnips and cabbages - often pre-cultivated. Also peas and beans are common, but need pre-cultivation.

Almost a "must" in Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha is probably the potato Lapin Puikula, an almond potato, which has a European Union Protected Designation of Origin.

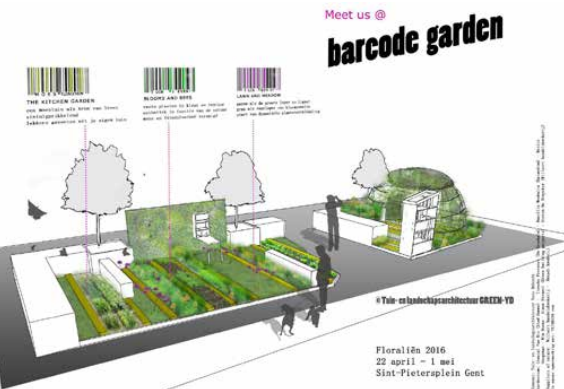
The miracle of growth

The allotment gardeners in Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha have seatboxes for watching the miracle of growth. During the short summer everything grows fast – day and night. This gives the gardeners strength to carry on and to cope with the long, dark and cold winter. In August the appearance of the allotments is very abundant and you can hardly believe being that far up north. That is something visitors from allotment gardens in southern Finland are amazed of.

If any of you readers happens to be close to the Polar Circle in August – do not miss visiting Napapiirin Ryhmäpuutarha!

Pictures above were taken in the middle of the night.

Belgium: The allotment gardeners present themselves: TUINHIER took part in the “Floralies” in Ghent



The Floralties 2016 are now over. It was superb, fantastic and a real relaxation in the centre of the town of Ghent. Those who visited the Floralties will certainly confirm this statement.

The federation “Tuinhier” was also present with a magnificent inspiration garden in the interior courtyard of the Abbey of Saint Peter. The subject of this courtyard was: “Urban green or the gardening in town”.

We needed eight days to build our garden. The result, however, was really worth our efforts. On our “Tuinhier” stand you could find ideas for your own garden, but you could also see the identity as well as the aims of our association “Tuinhier”. The main subjects were: “Healthy food, enjoying one’s garden, do it yourself and the ecological garden”.

Additionally, we organised two workshops. On April 26th one could learn everything about gardening on a one sqm large garden and on April 30th on gardening in town.

On April 25th, the members of our general assembly and of the executive board visited our stand and the other attractions.

Ghent was flowered during ten days from 22nd April until 1st May 2016!

Flowers and plants in dialogue with the unique sites in town.

The Floralties in Ghent have become a tradition taking place every five years. It is a dynamic and interactive display for young and old with fascinating and inspiring gardens, fantastic flower creations, workshops and presentations of new tendencies.

On four locations in Ghent you could discover the most beautiful flower creations realized by national and international florists, farmers, gardening architects and artists.

Besides numerous workshops, pop-up green and concept-rooms, the Flemish ornamental horticulture sector showed its most recent developments as far as research and innovation are concerned. It was a dynamic and interactive urban festival for old and young.



Great-Britain: The allotment gardeners of Wilderness Allotments Association and their support of disabled people



Wilderness Allotments Association in Porthcawl, South Wales has been working for several years in partnership with Trinity Care and Support to deliver an award winning Grow Your Own Club for adults and young people with mental, physical and learning disabilities. A plot on the site was adapted with the help of corporate organisations keen to widen participation and inclusivity within the community (Wates Living Space, A Plant, Travis Perkins and The Construction Training Centre) and with financial support from the town council. The enthusiastic team undertook various tasks including site clearance, laying paving slabs, erection of a perimeter screen and renovation of raised beds.

‘The club has opened up the world of growing, tending, cultivating and cooking up produce to individuals who would never contemplate an allotment’, said Wilderness Allotment Association Chairman David Rowe.

An added bonus has been that the Trinity Care staff, carers and volunteers have also found the activities therapeutic and look forward to their visits. The club members have followed organic, sustainable gardening principles to grow over 24 different crops, and then gone on to cook up the produce for a luncheon club, as well as selling chutneys and pickles.

‘The fact that we have severely disabled individuals on the site has been a two-way success story,’ Dave added. ‘For the disabled, exercise, fresh air, learning about gardening, harvesting and cooking their own produce; for the community generally, having our views about the limitations of disability challenged in a gentle way.’

Club members have a 40-minute return walk from their base in town to the allotment. ‘By any indicator – carbon-footprint, food miles, costs, etc – the project has been tremendously successful,’ David also said. ‘But the biggest achievement has been the simple pleasure of growing and cooking.’



The images show a visit to the project by Peter Ryan the Mentor for Wales and Di Appleyard the Marketing and Mentor Co-ordinator to attend a BBQ to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. Other official guests included the two local Police Community Support Officers who keep a watchful eye on the allotment ever since the arson-attack on the disabled plot a while back, plus the local Cub Scout Leader. Partygoers enjoyed barbecued sweetcorn, burgers, mediterranean wraps, rhubarb & ginger fool (made with allotment produce) and a mouth-watering selection of homemade cakes baked by service users and staff.

David Rowe, Allotment Committee Chairman, said that his vision is to make the Wilderness Allotments open & welcoming to all and the next stage in this journey is to build a disabled toilet that will benefit everyone on the site.



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