

THE NEWBURY
& DISTRICT
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY



EDUCATING NADAS

AUTUMN 2021 NEWSLETTER



WELCOME

The year is passing at a remarkable speed and hence it is time for another publication of "Educating NADAS".

In this edition you will find thoughts on the school curriculum, past and present, the spotlight on an independent business that supports the education programme for schools.

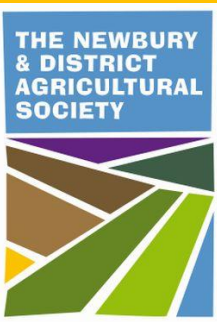
In contrast to the previous edition when a Primary school headteacher shone a light on her role, this time a support assistant from a local secondary school gives us a fascinating insight into her job.

As always, I am always open to comments and suggestions for future articles.

Happy reading!

Jan Murray
Education Officer

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CHANGE THE SUBJECT!

My late father's school leaving report recently surfaced and it made me reflect on how the school curriculum is constantly evolving and changing to reflect the demands of modern life and the skills and knowledge needed in the world of work.

My father attended a Technical School which he left in 1949 and some of the subjects he studied reflect the specialised focus of his school – Electricity, Mechanics, Engineering, Industrial Art and Applied Heat.

I suspect the content of some of these subjects would be very different to what might be part of a programme of study for today's world!

When I attended secondary school, on my timetable was Home Economics, (cooking by another name although bizarrely I do remember a trip to a sewerage farm organised by this subject....!), and Domestic Science, (this was sewing with a machine and the boys in my year group never got to do it).

Technical Drawing and Metal work were exclusively for the boys and us girls only got one term in the Woodwork Department, much to the amusement of staff as we were the first females ever to go in that particular building.

The National Curriculum came into being in 1989 and featured Design Technology for the first time. Drama has come and gone, in and out of favour over the years.....These days you will find that "Cookery" has been upgraded to Food Tech or Nutrition. Dance is a subject in its own right, rather than part of the PE agenda.

There is Business Studies, Economics, Computing, Statistics, Media Studies, Creative Media, Textiles, Psychology and PHSCE, (Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship Education). Alongside the opportunity to learn French or German, many schools offer Spanish and even Chinese.

I cannot help but wonder what the curriculum will look like in another decade or so. No doubt other subjects will feature that at this present time we cannot imagine.

Why not take a moment to reflect on which subjects were on offer to you and whether any of the above would have appealed to you if you had had the opportunity?

	9.00 – 10.00	10.00 – 11.00	11.00 – 12.00	1.00 – 2.00	2.00 – 3.00
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					

COLESHILL ORGANICS

One of the projects I run with secondary school students is Cookery School, which promotes using in season, locally sourced produce to create healthy dishes.

Due to changing circumstances, in September 2018 I began sourcing produce from a different business for some of the Newbury Schools that participate in Cookery School.

There are not a great many such businesses in existence locally and after some research I came across Coleshill Organics on the internet so decided to pay a visit to see if would be suitable both for sourcing produce and also for the schools to visit.

That proved to be an interesting experience!

Coleshill is a village in Oxfordshire, (until 1974 it was part of Berkshire), and is owned by the National Trust. It was built by the Earl of Radnor in the 19th century when he wanted to create a "typical" English country village for his employees.

He built cottages around the existing pub, former smithy and 12th century church. Coleshill Organics is situated inside the walled garden that formed part of the estate and to find it you pass through a door in the wall.

Once you are familiar with that, it is easy to find, but on my first visit I could not find it and returned to the showground baffled!



The business began in 1995 by Sonia Oliver on a small farm in Watchfield using just 2 acres, growing organic produce for friends and neighbours.

Over the past 20 years the business has gone from strength to strength and the plot Sonia cultivates in the walled garden is around 7 acres.

The main focus of the business is a fruit and vegetable box scheme which delivers to collection points and homes within a 15-mile radius of the site.

During the first lockdown in March 2020 demand for the boxes more than doubled within 2 weeks so Sonia has been kept busy!

She also has a presence at Stroud Farmers' Market.

COLESHILL ORGANICS (cont'd)



My interest in the business is the onsite honesty shop.

This is tiny, packed into a very small outbuilding where there are shelves loaded with fresh produce dug straight out of the ground – the route from the door in the walled garden takes you through the growing beds and greenhouses where you can see first-hand what is being grown.

The produce comes complete with soil still on it, so much so that on one occasion I came away with what I thought was swede, only to find when I cut into it in front of the students, that it was beetroot!

Luckily we were making soup, so was perfectly useable.

The culmination of Cookery School is a visit by the students to see where the produce has been sourced from.

As a result of the first lockdown, no visits took place in the summer of 2020 but in 2019 two schools had the pleasure of a guided tour by Sonia. They were able to see where the weekly boxes are packed before taking a walk all round the growing beds and trying some fresh summer produce.

The students found it very inspiring and returned to school keen to have a go at growing their own produce.

Growing in a walled garden for your business can have its challenges – not least dealing with the consequences of an estate fire and part of the wall collapsing!

But Sonia has “a passion to provide local people with the highest quality fresh produce”. If you are on a day out in that area, do factor in a visit.

You will not be disappointed with the freshness and quality of the seasonal produce you will find.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TEACHING ASSISTANT (SEN DEPARTMENT)

Before I start can I just say that no day in the life of a Teaching Assistant is never the same, lessons change, students have different challenges, and the weather (yes, the good British weather) makes a great difference to the mood and behaviour of students and staff?

- 7.55am – I head off to school; lucky for me I live 5 minutes' walk away.
- 8.00am – Kettle on and a cup of coffee made ready for my first role of the day.
- 8.20am – Out to bus duty, come rain or shine, welcoming around a 1000 students into school via the school busses.

"Good morning, you're looking smart today but maybe tucking your shirt in and doing your top button up will improve that look, thanks".

Checking everyone arrives safely and well, the odd mishap with travel sickness, or PE kit left at home, not issue too small to help sort out.

This role helps me check in with our SEN students or students that are not having the best of time at home or school.

Bus 12 has arrived safely and all disembarked, so off to second job of the day.

8.50am – "Teaching Assistant"

My role here is to support students with SEN needs.

This could be supporting in reading and writing, understand the task given, supporting with a science experiment, great if you're NOT using Bunsen Burners (my least favourite piece of equipment).

Today I am helping a student in Design and Technology.

Hair tied back (check) apron on (check) mask on (check).

Solder Iron hot; solder wire, circuit board, electrical wire and instructions (check).

This student has Fine Motor Skills issues so I have to hold their hands to help position the solder in the right area. This can be very stressful for the student as they don't want to be seen as different from the rest of the class.

Lots of reassurance and support needed along with laughter and smiles.



10.10am – I am now supporting a student with ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant).

This is sometimes very challenging and emotional, as the student has difficulties with Social Skills and Self Esteem. I spend an hour giving support and strategies to help the student become independent and confident within themself.

I find playing games or completing art projects relaxes the student so they talk more freely.

11.10am – Time for a well-earned Coffee break and if I'm lucky there might be cake or biscuits in the staffroom.

11.30am – It's time for Cookery School for PP (Pupil Premium students). This is run by Jan Murray from the Newbury and District Agricultural Society, Educational department.

Jan comes into school to cook with a group of selected students, bring along locally sourced ingredients to make delicious recipes.

I support with equipment along with helping the students follow the recipe. Strawberry tarts today.

Such a rewarding activity for these students.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TEACHING ASSISTANT (SEN DEPARTMENT) – cont'd

12.30pm – Now I'm back to being a TA, supporting a student in GCSE History.

My student is very independent and does not like me sitting near him so I complete all the classwork in a spare book so they can catch up with notes if they fall behind, also I have a resource that can be used for revision exercises.

A very rewarding lesson as I enjoy History and the student is appreciative of all that I do for him.

1.20pm – Lunch duty – I am Team Lead of 14 supervisors who organise lunch quest, patrol picnic areas around school on the playing field.

This is one of the less structured parts of the day, students are out picnicking, playing football or tennis, having fun chatting and socialising. Monitoring behaviour along with keeping an eye out for the student that might be upset, sitting on their own, is the main priority.

I really enjoy having a chat with students, walking around, listening and showing an interest in what they are doing and saying.

The bell goes at 2.10pm and it's back to being a TA again.

Lunch was eaten on the hoof, no time for a sit down, but I like to be busy.

2.15pm – A PE lesson. I support a student in getting changed, really just a prompt from outside the door to hurry up. It is Tennis this lesson, I end up being ball girl most of the time but good to be out in the fresh air.

No need for student to change at the end of the lesson it's straight to the buses to go home.

3.15pm – End of the day has arrived, and it is time to walk the long-distance home and make a well-earned cup of tea.

I sit back and relax, reflecting on the day.

A really-good day today, students all seemed happy, staff were pleased with my support and my pager didn't go off.

Finally, I am also a Senior First Aider at work, so I wear a pager to alert me to incidents I need to attend.

This could be cuts and grazes to broken bones, splinters to head injuries. All part of the package I offer to school.

Linda Moss
Teaching Assistant/ELSA/Lead Lunchtime
Supervisor



EDUCATION – NADAS IN NUMBERS

Due to the continued Covid related precautions in place, a full programme of events was not possible, and Jan managed to work with just 3 out of her 9 regular schools for Cookery School. Due to when schools returned in March, it was too late to run the Potato Challenge this year. Here are some of the highlights of what Jan has achieved:

Jan has visited **44** schools since mid-March.

2 Countryside Days for Schools were held at Englefield and Jan worked with **13** groups from **9** schools engaging with a total of **368** pupils as part of these countryside days.

14 Breakfast workshops have been delivered after being rescheduled from January. Jan engaged with **374** pupils through these workshops.

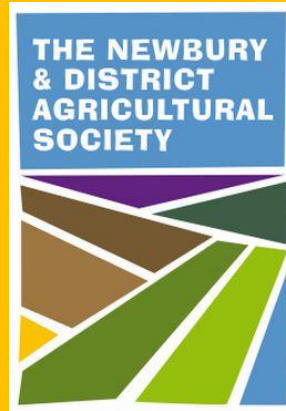
8 Cookery School practical sessions have been delivered.

Also...

The Agricultural Challenge for Special Education was judged remotely with the seven participating schools sending their entries electronically and I had a wonderful Zoom call with some of the teams to announce the results. The Design, Make and Market Challenge for secondary schools was also judged remotely after entries were again sent electronically

Buttercup, Rasher and Clover have all had outings and sausage making has taken place, including two Sausage workshops rescheduled from the second lockdown

- Jan Murray



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