ANDY, CAROLINE, DENNIS, KATHY, LORRAINE, JOY, PATSY, STEVE & VICTORIA

THE SPUD CLUB, CLAVER HILL COMMUNITY FARM, LANCASTER

Claver Hill Community Farm, Ridge Lane, Lancaster | facebook.com/ClaverHill

Joy: I wanted for a long time to grow vegetables. And I used to brainwash Caroline every time we went to a writing class, and then one day she rang me up and she said '*I have found our land*'.

Caroline: Yes, I was looking on the internet for somewhere else to live, and up popped 35 acres of land off Ridge Lane and I thought, '*I can't believe this*'. Joy said '*yes!*' and it took us a whole year to buy it. We didn't quite know what we were doing to say the least. And that is how it started, September 2013.

Steve: Claver Hill project field, five to six acres of sloping land, is sub-divided into a number of different community projects now, which is amazing. I became quite evangelical about '*no dig*' [the growing system used at Claver Hill's Spud Club project]. I've grown vegetables for about 30 years, and I always felt really dissatisfied with the results. Then I went on a course with a commercial grower who grows using 'no dig'. The idea was to mimic what a forest does - put things on the surface of the soil, let the worms and the life in the soil do the work and provide the nutrients for your plants. By not turning the soil you are not compacting it, you are encouraging the life in the soil to help and aid and support the growing of the food. So, it's enabled us to grow a large number of plants all the way through the year.

Kathy: I like the friendship, I like the learning. I like the nature, the fresh air, the exercise. But I suppose one of the things I like the least is that I don't like the fact that I'm getting too old really, and I can't do everything I used to do when I was 20 (laughs).

Andy: I was attracted [to the Spud Club] by a new way of working, of growing vegetables. The bonus for me coming here was actually the friendships and the learning that come with being with people who are experienced with growing. It's also part of a vision of a different way of producing food, of a different way that we can look at running our economy. Least? Trying to hold onto a compost toilet that was blowing away! (laughs).

Dennis: I enjoy community and I don't enjoy the rain (laughs).

Victoria: Although I had been here in Lancaster for three years, only when I got here [Claver Hill] I felt part of a community. So it was my way, as a foreigner, to be part of something in the UK. That was really important to me. And it gave me lots of support to do all the things as well. Actually, that was the most important thing for me about Claver Hill.

Lorraine: I love the community side of things. I live alone and so everything is down to me in my garden and my home and I just like coming up here and being with a group of people, it's just a really joyful part of my life. When you get a group of people anywhere there is going to be issues. So that's a bit taxing sometimes.

Patsy: The people. And I like coming down to help everybody and see the different vegetables all through autumn and winter and coming back, coming back each time. There's nothing I don't like about it, nothing at all.

Find out more at www.lessuk.org/blog/the-faces-behind-our-food