

# WOODLEY ALLOTMENT TENANTS ASSOCIATION

## SPECIAL BULLETIN – 42



### **Growing projects & opportunities for ‘The Commons’ exhibition at The MERL, Museum of English Rural Life, Reading, July 2020**

A new exhibition ‘The Commons’ will take place at [The MERL, Museum of English Rural Life](#) in July in Reading this year.

A number of artists will be responding to the context of the ‘[enclosure of the commons](#)’, and its impact on English rural history; with its social, colonial and ecological repercussions, though the collections of The MERL, intervening in the galleries, growing in the gardens, and curating a programme of activities and events, some of which are growing initiatives with interested participants and collaborators across Reading.

Another aspect of the project at The MERL includes growing certain plants with artist, Sigrid Holmwood, who will be exploring the idea of ‘*the commons*’ through the history of dye plants - the knowledges and technologies surrounding them, and their global histories.

She is looking for volunteers and collaborators to help grow Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), a plant native to Europe which contains indigo, and Chinese/Japanese Indigo (*Polygonum tinctoria*) in the gardens of The MERL. Sigrid can also provide seed for people to grow tropical indigo native to the Indian subcontinent (*Indigofera tinctoria*) at home indoors.

Seeds will be planted in March, and in the summer, the various indigo plants will be harvested and processed to discover how different cultures around the world have much in common when it comes to the ways of using indigo, as well as exploring unique inventions such as ‘Mayan Blue’.

If anyone is interested in this aspect of the project, please email [sigrid\\_holmwood@hotmail.com](mailto:sigrid_holmwood@hotmail.com) directly.

For more information about the whole project, you can download a complete fact sheet [here](#).

Many thanks  
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