

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 29 Summer 2008

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

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**IMPORTANT
DATES FOR
YOUR
DIARY!**

**AUTUMN
SOCIAL**

**Sunday
28 September,
12.30 – 3pm**

**AGM
Thursday
13 November,
7pm**

A sunny seedling sale this year!

Last year it was wet, wet, wet; this year – glorious sunshine! The tables were laden with healthy seedlings and plants donated by plottolders, ranging from all the usual suspects – tomatoes, beans, squash, peppers – to more unusual offerings including aloe vera and loofah seedlings. The Seed Store Café provided tea, coffee and a selection of delicious home made cakes; free range hot dogs were served by Sarah and Stanley, sweating over the hot bbq coals, and wine and cordials were on offer under the welcome shade of the gazebo. We made approx £190 towards site improvements and it was yet another enjoyable and social RPA event, thanks to the lovely weather and the considerable efforts of all



involved. Many thanks to all the volunteers on the stalls and in the café: Sue Croft and family, Gavin Collins and Lorraine Groves on the plant stall; Sarah and Stanley Colclough on BBQ; Gill Hiley and Jo Box on the drinks stall and Joanie Fulton and Barbara Hulm in the café and not least, thanks to Helga Foss for the wine, glasses and loan of the gazebo! **Next on the social calendar – the Autumn Social!**

Compost toilet garden

Please feel free to water, weed, tidy and add to the planted area around the compost toilet – the fedge needs lots of water and the weeds are rampant! The loo is for everyone and so is the garden around it! Thanks. Jenny Bourne

Royal Paddocks building – your views

compiled by Paul Richmond-Darbey

What should we do with the old café/office/storage building which needs expensive repairs?

A large majority of plottolders who replied to our survey would like to demolish some of the old building and renovate the remainder.

Our chairman, Barbara Wood, wrote to all plottolders in February asking you what you thought we should do. "The roof is in dire need of renovation. We have had an infestation of pigeons, a health hazard we could not ignore. Holes in the roof have been patched up," she wrote.

We got one quote for a new roof for £19,820 plus VAT. If new rafters were needed, and it is expected that most would have to be replaced, there would be a further cost of £14,000 plus VAT. Total: £33,820 plus VAT.

Barbara sent 225 letters. She received 35 replies.

She listed five options:

1. Demolish the whole building and possibly build another. (6 plottolders chose this option)
2. Demolish some of the building and renovate the remainder. (17 agreed)
3. Call in builders to renovate the existing building. (4 agree)
4. Renovate the existing building ourselves over a period of time. (4 agreed)
5. Do nothing now but deal with each problem as it arises. (5 agree)

■ If you haven't responded yet, there is still time to give us your views. You can put letters, addressed to Barbara Wood, through the letterbox in the shed just inside the main gate.



Here are some quotes from Plottolders' letters –

- "I think we need a building if only because it has always been there."
- "I have not been to the café or the office building for years – so I don't know how important it is to other people. I would answer:– "We don't need an office at all" – but if others are using and enjoying it – I would support the need to keep it."
- "It is in the best interests of the Royal Paddocks Allotments and the plottolders to maintain buildings to ensure continued growth and success of the allotment site."
- "How about a Pigeon Shoot?"
- "Maybe we don't need all of it. If we demolish part would we be able to retain the right to rebuild in future?"
- "Those two end rooms which are totally unsafe and beyond repair should be demolished. If possible the bricks should be saved along with any other materials for repairs to the other rooms as and when needed. All monies saved should be used for the upkeep of the pumps and installation of new ones which should be our main priority."

Committee Notices

A reminder to park when possible off road.

If you have to bring your vehicle on to the site to unload please park to one side of the road to allow pedestrians (allowing space for people with wheelbarrows) and cyclists to pass. If asked to move, please do so immediately. Do not park in front of anyone else's plot. Always leave your plot number clearly visible on the windscreen.

Combustible or compostable?

- If you use the incinerator make sure all waste is burnt before you leave. Only burn non-compostable dry vegetation.
- Please do not dump rubbish anywhere on site – take it away with you.

NEW MAIN GATE

Take note. **The new railing gates must be closed at all times.** The wooden gates will stay open all day but will be locked at the usual time in the evenings.

WELCOME NEW PLOTHOLDERS

Nigel and Mark plot 4, Tim and Melissa plot 21b, John and Sarah plot 79, David and Helen plot 100, Annie plot 118, Jenni plot 190, Michael plot 138b, Mei plot 197b and Chris plot 116.

Royal Horticultural Society benefits

RPA is affiliated to the RHS, meaning that groups of ten or more can benefit from reduced ticket prices to RHS sites or events such as the Hampton Court Flower Show. Contact Jenny Bourne (details opposite) for information.

NEXT ON THE SOCIAL CALENDAR –

The Autumn Social – Sunday 28 September 2008, 12.30 – 3pm

Your Autumn Social Needs You!

We are asking for volunteers for the Autumn Social. If you could help out with any of the following please contact Jenny Bourne (details below):



running stalls – tombolas etc
childrens' craft activities
setting up and clearing away – tent/gazebo/stalls etc
Seed Store café – taking a shift or cake making
the barbecue and raffle
making produce for the Home Produce stall
donating good quality prizes for the kids' and adults' tombolas or the raffle

And don't forget the competitions for the biggest pumpkin and tallest sunflower – we hope to have a pumpkin judge from the NPL again so get feeding, tending and nurturing! Last year's winner, Jo Nicholds, grew her pumpkin on her manure heap and has donated seeds from her monster to fellow plotters, so it may be a battle of the titans! Jenny Bourne plot no 27f/28b, tel: 0208 943 1792, mob: 07732 011936, jenbourne@btinternet.com

The water supply on our site

We, the Plotters' Committee, have received several complaints recently that the water pumps are not working properly; e.g. they are hard to pump and they don't hold their prime. Some have failed to work at all, but spare parts, usually leather washers, have been fitted to rectify that problem.

The pumps were installed some sixty years ago and we must accept the fact that the pumps cannot last forever.

We have spent much time during the last three years searching for suppliers and installers of hand pumps and have found only one in the UK. The pump heads and spares have had to be shipped from the Czech Republic. On several occasions in the past we have asked for volunteers to help to sink the new pipes but the response has been disappointing (thanks must be extended to those who have helped). We have sunk three new pumps that are working reasonably well, but we need more. To that end we have decided to pay for two new pumps to be installed at a cost of £880 + vat each (from 26th June).

In the meantime, we can all help to preserve the existing pumps. The main cause of loss of prime is dirt and grit in the leather washers, so please use only clean water for priming (always leave the tank full for the next person) and stop pumping if sand comes out. Do not use the water in the tanks to wash your vegetables or your boots and keep the tanks clean. This will also help prevent the spread of diseases! On no account should containers that have held herbicides or pesticides be rinsed out in the tank/bath water. Please treat the pumps with respect – gentle pumping produces the same amount of water as fast, vigorous pumping! And please discourage children from playing with the pumps.



Our new Constitution

The plotters adopted a new constitution in April at an Extraordinary General Meeting. It replaces a 1957 draft constitution, writes Chris Pocock.

Two years ago the Plotters' Committee decided that a new constitution was desirable because it would protect committee members from being sued as individuals and might satisfy grant-giving bodies when we seek funds from elsewhere.

The Plotters' Committee was responsible for all day to day management of business within the allotment site.

The Management Committee was responsible for setting and collecting rents, letting and terminating tenancies, settling unresolved disputes with tenants, and dealing with outside bodies. The Management Committee met once a year and consisted of six Richmond Councillors and four plotters.

Under the new constitution, the Plotters' Committee still have the responsibility for the day to day running of the site with the added duties of collecting rents, dealing with outside bodies, letting plots and terminating tenancies.

The Management Committee will now consist of four Council-appointed and five Plotters' Committee-appointed members. It will act as an overseeing body and arbitrator of unresolved disputes amongst the members.

We expect this to be a more efficient way of working. It's your Constitution and can, of course, be amended at any Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

Gardening for climate change

Climate change, global warming, decline of native wildlife species, bee populations plummeting, gardens disappearing under concrete.. what can the gardener/allotmenteer do?

Cleve West, TV presenter, Independent columnist and local plotholder (Bushy Park allotments), gave a talk, Gardening for Climate Change, to the Friends of Bushy Park. This is a summary of his practical advice on managing our gardens/allotments for, rather than against, climate change, sustainability, enhancing biodiversity and reducing our carbon footprints.

- Trees are important, as windbreaks, for wildlife habitat and to provide shade.
- Growing our own not only gives us fresh produce but cuts air miles – allotments are in the vanguard of this localised sustainability – Cleve highlighted their importance in 'building communities'.
- Group plants with similar water and soil needs together.
- Mulch and make your own compost.
- Reduce the amount of fertiliser on lawns, don't water in spring, don't cut too short and leave clippings to mulch.
- Conserve water using water butts; try a green roof on sheds and buildings where possible (he has one on his allotment shed).
- Encourage beneficial wildlife – grow nectar rich plants, leave an area for habitat, put in a pond.

These were his gardening 'do's' and 'don'ts':

DO

- Understand your plants' and soil requirements
- Conserve water
- Reuse and reclaim plants and materials – swap seeds and cuttings, use and recycle local materials
- Make room for wildlife

DON'T

- Have bonfires, restrict to winter only
- Cover gardens with impermeable surfaces – if using paving leave unpainted

He finished by saying that gardening is evolving from life style choice to necessity and recommended **New Gardening – How to Garden in a Changing Climate** by Matthew Wilson, £18.99
RHS, ISBN: 9781845333058

Reported by Jenny Bourne



Book reviews

View from a Shed

I knew Michael Wale as a rowing cox and sports broadcaster when I was a rowing club boatman; my wife was rowing in those days and Michael coxed her crew at times. She reckons he could swear better than me. A rare distinction. As well as being a determined and committed sportsman, Wale is also a keen gardener and allotment activist. This delightful little book tells the story of the Acton Allotments, the author's plot and his struggle with everything from developers to tomato blight.

There is no shortage of 'how to do it' manuals on veg growing but this is much more than that. True, there are plenty of useful tips, but mainly this is a store of anecdotes about plants, compost and the great characters who make up Wale's fellow plotholders. What comes shining through is not just a love of growing but also a real affection for people. Just right for keeping in the shed for when that sudden shower forces you inside.

The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture by David Crouch and Colin Ward is a different kettle of fish altogether. This fascinating book could be the master work on the social history of the allotment movement. Ever wondered how come we have allotments in the first place? The authors trace the struggle for the provision of allotments back to the Enclosures Acts, the industrial revolution and the impoverishment of a now landless working class. On a slightly less political note I was surprised to learn that the veg growing versus leisure garden debate is not confined to the Royal Paddocks but was even one of the considerations of a government committee set up during the '60s. 'Dig for Victory', the right to land, the aesthetics of allotments, the social and cultural diversity of present day plotholders – this is a celebration of all of this and more besides. It won't improve your veg growing one bit but it might cause you to view the plot from a slightly different angle.

Ray Hulm plot 93

The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture

David Crouch & Colin Ward
Mushroom Bookshop 1994
ISBN 978 0 907123 91 0

View from a Shed

Michael Wale
Allison & Busby
ISBN 0749082240

Pigeons...

The website pigeoncontrol.com.au reports that: "Pigeons are a population which is fast growing – we call them the 'flying rat', some people argue this, but they do not know the full extent of the mess, damage and disease they cause.

"Pigeons are not a protected species, they are a health hazard to the work environment, can wreak havoc in the workplace and spread many diseases – such as lung disease, heart disease, kidney disease, (brain disease through mosquito), salmonella, respiratory problems and asthma attacks. Pigeons have been likened to asbestos and for the health and safety of your work environment, should be removed and controlled."

"Pigeons' highly acidic droppings can cause extensive damage to all surfaces and can contaminate products and stored goods. Many viral diseases and health hazards can occur from the droppings of pigeons.

- If you find any website which may be of interest to plotholders, please let us know and we will include details in future editions of this newsletter.

YOUR PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Barbara Wood, Chair, Plots 182–4, 201
Marguerite Pocock, Secretary, Plot 55, 62b
Gavin Collins, Treasurer, Plot 163
Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary, Plot 27f, 28b
Gill Hiley, Plot 50
Jean Blanc, Plots 29, 162
Jo Box, Plots 160, 161
Ashley Catto, Plots A, H
Paul Richmond-Darbey, Editor, The Plotholder, Plot 45
John Greenhalgh, Plot 120
Lorraine Groves, Plot 27b
Robert Trevillion, Plot 137
Chris Pocock, Plots 55, 62b

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors: James Mumford (Chair), Gareth Evans,
Pat Parsons, Liz Jaeger, Jonathan Cardy, Jerry Elloy.
Tenants: Barbara Wood (Chairman RPA), Gavin Collins,
Jean Blanc, Chris Pocock, Susan Saunders (Hon. Clerk)

FIRST AIDERS

Mary Newing, Plot 53
Lorraine Groves, Plot 27b
John Greaves, Plot 111f

A glut of courgettes? No problem. Here's some RECIPES

MAGGIE'S COURGETTE SLICE

375 gm grated courgettes	1/2 cup oil
3 rashers chopped bacon	1 cup self-raising flour
1 large onion, finely chopped	5 eggs, well beaten
1 cup grated cheese	2 tbsps fresh chopped herbs

Mix courgettes, bacon, onion, cheese and herbs well (fresh marjoram is especially nice in this dish). Add self raising flour and mix further. Beat eggs with oil – mix well with other ingredients. Pour into a shallow ovenproof dish. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees C), for 40 – 45 mins, or until top is nicely browned.

COURGETTE AND BASIL SOUP

50 gm butter
1 onion
700 gm courgettes
2 1/2 cups chicken stock
1/4 tsp nutmeg
1 tbsp fresh chopped basil
pepper
1/2 cup milk



Melt butter. Add chopped onion and cook gently until tender. Slice courgettes, add to onion with chicken stock. Cover and simmer 20 mins. Puree in blender with basil and seasonings. Add milk and reheat. **DO NOT BOIL.**

RHUBARB CHUTNEY (2)

This is a recipe from the National Trust's 'Jams, Preserves and Edible Gifts', now our favourite chutney. It's excellent for using up a late-season glut of rhubarb, as well as coriander seeds (we try to grow coriander for its leaf but always end up with half a ton of seeds).



1 lb of onions, finely chopped
2lb of trimmed rhubarb, cut into short lengths
1/2 teaspoons of salt
8 oz of seedless raisins
8 oz of sultanas
3/4 pint of red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoons of curry powder
6 oz of granulated sugar
1/2 oz of coriander seeds

Bruise the coriander seeds and tie in a square of muslin. Put all the ingredients in a pan and cook for 1 1/2 – 2 hours. Pot up. Allow to mature for at least one month.

Jane and David Harnden

The upside down world of gardening

A reminder of the consequences of not securing sheds – taken after the stormy weather on 9/10th March this year.



How to contact us:

You can leave mail for the Committee (but not money), in the postbox in the shed by the gate. Our website address is www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

We welcome all contributions to **The Plotholder**. Contact the Editor, Paul Richmond-Darbey TravelEds@AOL.com or jenbourne@btinternet.com.