

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 30 Winter 2008

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

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CHRISTMAS IN THE SEED STORE CAFÉ

Sunday
14 December,
11am – 1pm

- ▲ Mulled wine,
- ▲ mince pies
and
- ▲ Christmassy
treats!

This year's cup prizewinner, George Loosemore, was interviewed for 'The Plotholder' over a cup of tea and cake at the Seed Store Café

by Jenny Bourne

JB – What made you take on your plot?

GL – I lived in Seymour Road and I had a little garden and someone asked me to take a plot over.

JB – What changes have you seen?

GL – Lots... lots... different faces, different people, people that's still alive and died.

JB – What successes and failures have you had on your plot?

GL – Weeds... !

JB – What's your secret for a prize winning plot?

GL – Well, I keep telling the committee not to give me a prize, I didn't want one... but, just digging, working on it, that's all... I'm retired and so I can spend more time up here working on it.

JB – What are your hopes for the future of the site?

GL – Shall I be serious?... build a Tesco here! No, just improve the place, get more people up here, new people, show 'em what to do, that's all.



And congratulations to all the successful plotholders this year...

● Full Plot

- 1st Prize, George Loosemore, plot 75
(Beautiful, neat and tidy, weed free, good variety)
- 2nd Prize, Elizabeth and Grey Rigge, plot 83
(Good variety, well-cultivated... no wasted space)
- 3rd Prize, Peter Caughey, plot 40
(Attractive, well-kept, good vegetables, herbs)

● Half Plot

- 1st Prize, Peter Caughey, plot 39b
(Neat and tidy plot, good use of space)
- 2nd Prize, Caroline Dick, plot 194f
(Well-kept and well laid out... good flowers)
- 3rd Prize, George Loosemore, plot 74b
(Quality crops – particularly cabbages, and fruit)

● New Tenant, Full Plot

- 1st Prize, Tricia McLellan, plot 105
(Well cultivated... good variety and quality of crops)
- 2nd Prize, Gill and John Anderson, plot 157
(... a good improvement from when it was taken on)
- 3rd Prize, John and Sarah Hawkins, plot 79
(Was good plot, let go, but brought back to standard)

● New Tenant, Half Plot

- 1st Prize, Ian Emeny 33b
(Good crops and a good range... no weeds)
- 2nd Prize, Joel Jones and Carole Darling, plot 132f
(Had been in a poor state... amazing turn-round)
- 3rd Prize, Len Cowking, plot 134b
(Reasonable variety of crops, good turn-round)

The Autumn Social, 28 September

by Jenny Bourne

cA glorious sunny day ensured another enjoyable Autumn Social – jam sales up on the Home Produce stall, wine bar courtesy of Helga Foss, great prizes for the Raffle thanks to the generosity of local businesses, tasty bbq, children decorating mugs and photo frames in the tent and, what is becoming a high spot on the social calendar, the fiercely contested pumpkin competition, judged again with great entertainment value by Andrew Hanson from the National Physical Laboratory. Thanks to the café and stalls volunteers and everyone who helped with setting up and clearing away, not least Jem Negus, Ray Hulm and Ian Hopkins. A real community effort!

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News from your Committee

NEW PROJECTS

The Plotholders Committee has started two projects.

The first is to see if we can get external funding for repairing and restoring the office/café building. We'll let you know what happens.

The second is to conduct a review of all the issues connected with letting plots and the standard of cultivation required, including: the information given to new plotholders; the frequency and consistency of inspections; our policy towards plotholders who aren't cultivating their plots; the question of how many plots an individual can have; and our waiting list policy. The review will pay close attention to the terms of the 1921 Licence, the Tenancy Agreement and the Constitution.

If you have views on any of the above (or related) subjects, we'd like to hear them. You could put down your thoughts in writing and post them in the shed letterbox by the gate or, if you prefer, speak at one of the meetings of the subcommittee handling the review (we'll let you know the meeting dates when we've decided on them). If you want to be on the subcommittee please let us know in writing as soon as possible, remembering to include your name, plot number and contact details.

David Harnden, Chairman

WELCOME TO NEW PLOTHOLDERS

David plot 38, Amy plot 32f, Peter plot 133, Sheridan plot 119, Bill plot 4, Flora plot 130, Jackie plot 67f, Charlotte plot 197b, Yolande plot 107 and Julie plot 86b.

THE PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

David Harnden, Chair, Plot 152
Marguerite Pocock, Secretary, Plot 55, 62b
Gavin Collins, Treasurer, Plot 163
Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary, Plot 27f, 28b
Ashley Catto, Plots A, H
John Greenhalgh, Plot 120
Lorraine Groves, Plot 27b
John Hawkins, Plot 79
Gill Hiley, Plot 50
Shirley Murray, Plot 3
Chris Pocock, Plots 55, 62b
Bob Trevillion, Plot 137
Barbara Wood, Plots 182, 183, 184

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors: James Mumford (Chair),
Gareth Evans, Jonathan Cardy, Jerry Elloy.
Tenants: Chris Pocock, David Harnden,
Bob Trevillion (Deputy Chair), John Greenhalgh
Susan Saunders (Secretary)

FIRST AID

THERE IS A FIRST AID BOX IN THE SHED BY THE MAIN GATE.

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

If anyone has First Aid training and could add their names to the list, please let someone on the committee know.

THE OFFICE

A committee member is available on site every Sunday between 11am and Midday, in the Seed Store Café, to deal with queries.

How our Composting Toilet works

The toilet is a twin vault composting toilet. It consists of a hole in the ground about 8ft x 4ft x 4ft deep, brick lined and with a dividing brick wall. The back has 2 removable panels with access via a slope in the ground. The building above the vaults contains a bench each side and both have a toilet seat and a tight fitting lid. Underneath each seat is a shute cover in black plastic and a containing urine separator. The used hand-sink water helps to flush the shute. Both vaults are independently fitted with ventilation pipes through the roof of the building and as the inside of the vaults is very dark, flies are not attracted and are kept to a minimum.

One side of the toilet is used for a year and then sealed. The other side is then used for a year and then sealed. The first side is opened, the contents are removed via the back panel and is used as compost and the process is then repeated.

Chris Pocock

Hedging for privacy and food...

The Royal Paddocks allotments are protected on three sides by a handsome brick wall, but the fourth side, along Church Passage, is bounded by new railings – secure, but less secluded. To improve privacy, and to help solve a rubbish problem spoiling the view along that side, we decided to plant a mixed-species native hedge. Because of the length involved, it's taken three winters to plant, but the first section, at the Church Grove end, is growing strongly, and the rest is catching up.

The hedge contains 50% hawthorn, and a 50% mix of hazel, guelder rose, blackthorn, field maple and dogrose. The thorns will help security, and the fruits and nuts will provide a valuable source of food both for wildlife and tenants – a future batch of Royal Paddocks Sloe Gin should be a definite possibility.

Andrew and Susan Saunders

JOBS FOR WINTER AND SPRING

What to do in Winter:

Early Winter

- Press on with winter digging if your soil needs it. The heavier the soil, the earlier it should be cultivated.
- Order seed and seed potatoes.
- Check stored crops for signs of mould, rot or vermin attacks. If roots start sprouting then the store could be too warm.
- Clear and compost as much as possible especially exhausted brassicas to avoid pest and disease.
- Turn compost heaps to revive activity.

Plant now:

Fruit, globe artichokes, garlic, rhubarb and shallots

Early Spring

- Have all your seeds and supplies like canes and potting compost ready for the new season.
- Use cloches and fleece to protect seeds, seedlings and crops from frost.
- Prepare seedbeds and nursery beds; cover with cloches or plastic film to warm the soil.

Sow now:

Beetroot, broad beans, bulbing onions, carrots, chard, early peas, kohlrabi, land cress, parsnips, perpetual spinach, radishes, rocket, turnips, summer spinach.

Plant now:

Outdoors – asparagus, bulbing onions, early potatoes, garlic, globe artichokes, mint, spring cabbage, strawberries, summer cabbage and summer cauliflowers.

Sarah Colclough



Highlights of the Autumn Social – workers and winners...



CHILLI CHOCOLATE CAKE

– AN ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS CAKE

Customise the cake to suit your tastes – add more chilli if you like more heat. Try fudge icing for a sweeter tooth or the bitter chocolate for a sophisticated taste and finish.

INGREDIENTS

150g plain chocolate	1 tsp vanilla essence
2 tsp coffee granules	1 tbs water
1tsp chilli flakes (or more if you like), crushed with pestle & mortar or bashed with a rolling pin	Peel of half a medium orange, finely grated
125g butter	FUDGE ICING
125g caster sugar	300g icing sugar
5 eggs, separated	25g <i>Divine</i> cocoa powder
75g self raising flour	125g butter
1 pinch bicarbonate of soda	4tbsp of water
1 tsp baking powder	BITTER CHOCOLATE ICING
2tbsp cocoa powder	180g dark chocolate
1tbsp rum, orange juice or water	125g unsalted butter
	1tbsp golden syrup

Preheat the oven to 160°C/gas 3.

Line and grease a 20-22cm tin (springform or loose-based). Melt the chocolate by placing the pieces in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water, not allowing the bowl to touch the water. Add the coffee granules and chilli. Let the mix melt then stir with a wooden spoon. Remove bowl and leave to cool. Cream the softened butter with the caster sugar in a food mixer or the proper way, with a wooden spoon, until light and white. Gently stir in the cooled chocolate and four egg yolks. Sift the flour, baking powder and cocoa powder into the bowl and then add the grated orange rind. Fold the mix gently together with a metal spoon using big scooping movements. Add the rum, vanilla and water.

Whisk 5 egg whites until stiff (don't overwhisk). Add to the mixture by beating in the first tablespoon to loosen the consistency. Then fold the rest in very gently using a metal spoon. Don't worry if it's not perfect, as it can be hard to combine the two.

Pour the mix into the tin and put it in the oven for 45-50 minutes (check after 35 – ovens vary!). To test it, prick with a cocktail stick. It should come out clean. Don't worry if the top of the cake has cracked a bit – you'll be icing it up. Remove and place on a cooling rack. Take out of the tin after five minutes and leave to cool. Brush the glaze on while still a bit warm.

TO MAKE THE FUDGE ICING: combine the sifted icing sugar and cocoa powder in a bowl. Melt the butter and water and pour into the icing sugar mix. Beat until combined. It should be easily spreadable but not runny, so you might not need all the liquid. Cover the top of the cake and sides generously with the icing, tip it then finish using a spatula. Go for a smooth or a rough finish. You can decorate with cherries, grated chocolate, crumbled flake or chocolate curls (peel from a bar of chocolate with a potato peeler).

FOR THE BITTER CHOCOLATE ICING: melt chocolate pieces in a bain marie (as above) with butter and golden syrup. Pour it over the cake for a smooth finish. Let it set.

Couch potato potato shopping

One of the great joys of mid-winter is sitting down with the seed catalogues and deciding what to buy.

Thompson and Morgan

They supply potatoes, onions, garlic, fruit trees and bushes, flower seeds, plants and gardening equipment.

The Organic Gardening Catalogue – www.organiccatalog.com

Excellent web site with good choice of seeds and other products. Organic emphasis. Worth ordering their catalogue.

Mr Fothergills – www.Mr-Fothergills.co.uk

Chiltern Seeds – www.chilternseeds.co.uk

Premium quality seeds of over 5,000 species and varieties, suitable for the home gardener and the specialist plant collector.

DT Brown Seeds – www.dtbrownseeds.co.uk

A good range of vegetable and flower seeds at competitive prices plus seed potatoes, onions, garlic, shallots, fruit plants, accessories.

Dobies – www.dobies.co.uk

Kings Seeds Online – www.kingsseeds.com

Respected supplier with large range of flowers, vegetables, organic varieties, sprouting seeds, plants, grass seeds, sundries.

Medwyn's of Anglesey – www.medwynsofanglesey.co.uk

10 RHS gold medals, Medwyn can certainly grow vegetables. 100s of articles about growing for show as well his specialist vegetable seed.

Real Seeds – www.realseeds.co.uk

Varieties that do really well and taste great. Many rare heirlooms, and all open-pollinated (non-hybrid) so you can save your seed for future.

W Robinson and Sons Ltd – www.mammothonion.co.uk

If you want to grow champion sized vegetables look no further than this seed catalogue!

Seeds of Italy – www.seedsofitaly.com

Seeds, culinary equipment, recipes and information. Wonderful selection, very generous amounts of seeds and reliable germination.

Suffolk Herbs – www.suffolkherbs.com

Comprehensive stockist of organic seed.

Edwin Tucker and Sons Ltd - www.edwintucker.com

Suttons Seeds – www.suttons.co.uk

Moles Seeds – www.molesseeds.co.uk

A leading supplier of ornamental and vegetable seed.

Nickys Seeds – www.nickys-nursery.co.uk

Over 600 Varieties of vegetable seeds. Specialising in Chilli Pepper, Baby and Oriental veg.

Unwins Seeds & Plants – www.Unwins-Seeds.co.uk

Their website offers a comprehensive range of seeds, plants and trees. Their paper catalogue contains a wonderful range of sweet peas!

Marshalls Seeds – www.Marshalls-Seeds.co.uk

Established UK seed supplier, offers free catalogues and a wide range to order online.

Seeds of Distinction – www.plantsofdistinction.co.uk

Lots of heritage/interesting varieties.

MoreVeg – www.moreveg.co.uk

500 varieties, more than half @ 50p, specialising in small quantities of seeds, designed to cut down on waste, lots of herbs.

Terwins Seeds – www.terwinseeds.co.uk

No frills list, good prices.

Simpsons – www.simpsonseeds.co.uk

Sarah Raven – www.sarah.raven.co.uk

Use catalogue to research unusual varieties. Good photographs and gardening diary available with growing chart in the back.

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

Submit items for the next newsletter

We welcome all contributions to 'The Plotholder'. Contact jenbourne@btinternet.com

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