

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 37 October 2011

THE PLOTHHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

Inside this issue:

Page 2

Committee News
Seasonal Recipes

Page 3

Picture Gallery –
the Autumn Social
and Produce Show

Page 4

Sue Croft –
Channel Swimmer
How to contact us

FUTURE EVENTS –

AGM

Thursday 10th
November,
starts at 8pm

at Bullen Hall
(note new venue).
Latest date for
nominations for
new Committee
members is 27th
October. **HURRY!**

For details see page 2

Grand turn-out at the Autumn Social and Produce Show!



This year's big annual get-together took place on Sunday 11 September and was a resounding success. The pumpkins were bigger, the scarecrows scary, the fruit and veg more impressive, and the food and drink more delicious than ever before. A couple of light showers made everyone appreciate the shelter provided by our brand new gazebos and drove so many people into the drinks tent that the beer ran out ...



More pictures of the day and full details of prizewinners on page 3

Left: measuring the tallest sunflower



CHRISTMAS CAFÉ

Sunday 18th
December

11am – 1pm

Never mind if it snows! There will be lots of warming drinks and a wonderful choice of seasonal delights to eat.

Rebuilding of Park Wall

Work is well advanced on repairs to the stretch of park wall between the fire-damaged stable building and the cricket club. At first it was thought that only the top few courses of bricks would need to be repaired, but a later inspection found that the grade II-listed wall was leaning dangerously and the Bushy Park authorities decided that the wall should be taken down to its foundations and rebuilt. This meant the fire-damaged walls on the

southern end of the stable building were no longer supported by the park wall, and they were taken down to ensure the safety of the workmen.

However, the contractors have salvaged as many bricks as possible and have also removed all the debris from the site.

At the AGM we will give details of proposals for you to consider concerning renovation of the part of the stable block still standing after the fire.

Contributions for the next newsletter? – jenbourne@btinternet.com

News from your Committee

WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS

Richard and Tessa Pain (plot 3), Marie Jones and Philip Alexander (plot 18), Allan and Vanessa Hyde (plot 48f), Wenjuan Sun and Qingan Huang (plot 107), Marc-Alexander Small (plot 121), Matthew Dodd-Noble and Lucy Thwaite (plot 183), Alan Fraser (plot 184), Claire Boutsivaras (plot 191b), Zoe and Edward Millington-Jones (plot 37f).

THE OFFICE Open every Sunday, 11am – 12 noon.

THE PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Marguerite Pocock (Secretary), Gavin Collins (Treasurer), Chris Pocock and Scott Hillman have recently resigned from the committee. Our thanks go out to them for all the hard work they've put in.

Over many years Marguerite has made a significant contribution to the RPA and in her role as Secretary she has worked tirelessly for the benefit of the plottolders. Chris's work may sometimes have gone unnoticed but his practical contribution to site maintenance and facilities, eg the compost toilet, has been invaluable.

Gavin has contributed a great deal to the fund-raising and financial well-being of the Association. And Scott has brought his skills to the ongoing negotiations over the possible renovation of the burnt-out Seed Store.

It with great sadness and regret that we have to pass on the news that committee member Angus Carswell recently died after a short illness. We will all miss him.

At next month's AGM, on Thursday 10 November, the members of the Plottolders' Committee for the coming year are elected. We are always looking for new people to join the team that helps keep our site running smoothly. We meet about once a month and deal with issues such as the waiting list, new lets, rent collections, plot inspections, the pumps, general site maintenance, the bee and wildlife areas, and social events like the Seedling Sale and the Autumn Produce Show.

Why not join us?

If you'd like to volunteer, you must be proposed and seconded by two tenants/plottolders. Collect a form from the Seed Store Café or from the shed by the pedestrian gate, and submit it by 27 October.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Council appointees: Tania Mathias (Chair), Jonathan Cardy, Gareth Evans, Jerry Elloy

Tenants: Bob Trevillion (Deputy Chair), Susan Saunders (Secretary), Gavin Collins, David Harnden, Chris Pocock

WAITING LIST

On Sunday 4 September we re-opened our waiting list to residents of Hampton Wick and South Teddington who want to put their name down for a plot. Applicants apply in person on a first-come, first-served basis. So, unsurprisingly, there was a long queue outside the gate to the site well before 11 o'clock on the first morning. Over 40 people applied for a plot within a single hour – and the list has continued to grow steadily every Sunday since. It's a testament to how amazingly popular allotments have become and how keen families are to grow their own.

Recipes

This comforting sausage casserole is the perfect Bonfire Night recipe to warm you up on a sparkling night.

Sausage, Pumpkin and Sage Casserole

- 50g/1³/₄oz butter
- 6 good-quality sausages, pricked several times
- 1 onion, peeled, thinly sliced
- 3 banana shallots, peeled, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh sage
- 1 small pumpkin, peeled, seeds removed, cut into equal-sized pieces
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 200g/7oz canned chopped tomatoes
- 400g/14oz canned cannellini beans, drained, rinsed
- 500ml/18fl oz chicken stock
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh flatleaf parsley, to serve



Preparation method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.
2. Heat half the butter in a large casserole over a medium heat and fry the sausages for 4 – 5 minutes, or until golden-brown all over.
3. Add the remaining butter, onion and shallots and fry for three minutes, or until softened. Add the garlic and sage leaves and cook for a further three minutes, stirring well.
4. Add the pumpkin and stir the mixture until well combined. Increase the heat to high and add the white wine vinegar. Continue to cook until most of the liquid has evaporated.
5. Add the sugar, tomatoes, cannellini beans and stock and season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
6. Bring the mixture to the boil, then transfer the casserole to the oven for one hour, or until the sausages are cooked through and the pumpkin is tender.
7. To serve, ladle the casserole into two large bowls and sprinkle with the flatleaf parsley.

Roasted Garlic and Apple Chutney

- 1 whole bulb of garlic
- 3 large onions, peeled and chopped into small chunks
- 1.5kg apples, cored and roughly chopped into small chunks
- A couple of large handfuls of raisins
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 mug of brown sugar (white will also do)
- 2 mugs of cider vinegar



Method

1. Slice the very top off the garlic bulb so that you can just see the flesh of the garlic cloves through the skin. Pop this onto a baking tray, top side up, and into the oven 190°C/375°F/gas 5 for 45 mins.
2. Put all the other ingredients into a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Give them a stir now and then and bring back to a simmer. When your garlic is roasted (it will be soft and squishy), squeeze the garlic from the root end out of the bulb and into the pot. Let the chutney simmer uncovered for about 1½ – 2 hrs, stirring from time to time.
3. The chutney should be ready when it becomes a thick porridge-like consistency. Spoon this into sterilised jars, close, cool and store in the cupboard for approx 3 months to mature.

Competition Prizewinners

GIANT PUMPKINS

Largest pumpkin

Martin Scotton (plot 59)

Heaviest pumpkin

62.1kg Laura and Abigail Avery (plot 65)

57.3kg Martin Scotton (plot 59)

35.08kg Poppy and Lily Wood (plot 102)

26.87kg Steve Todd and Philip Smith (plot 80)

23.76kg Bethan and Robert Griffiths (plots 84 & 85)

SCARECROWS

Age 6 or under

1st Patrick Neilan (plot 190)

Age 7-10

1st equal Sophie Eddington (age 10) (plot 10f)

1st equal Bethan Griffiths (age 10) (plots 84 & 85)

2nd Robert Griffiths (age 10) (plots 84 & 85)

Age 11-16

1st Alice Newbould (plot 88f)

2nd equal Ella Geraty

2nd equal Emily Coates (age 13) (plot 142)

TALLEST SUNFLOWERS

284cm Thea, Tom and Sylvie Royce (ages 10, 8 and 14 months) (plot 4)

261cm Eva Wilcock (age 8) (plot 129)

245cm Orla Bell (age 8) (plot 42f)

228cm Max Buckingham (age 14) (plot 185)

200cm Jack and Tom Croft) (ages 7 and 10) (plot 73)

182cm Sylvia and Mema Nesbitt (ages 11 and 7) (plot 153f)

VEG CROPS

Three examples of the same veg – roots

1st Hilary, Bethan and Robert Griffiths (plots 84 & 85)

2nd Liz and Gray Rigge (plot 83)

3rd Laura and Rob Newbould (plot 88f)

Three examples of the same veg – alliums

1st Laura and Rob Newbould (plot 88f)

Three examples of the same veg – squash

1st Steve Todd and Philip Smith (plot 80)

2nd Boula Rice (plot G)

3rd Denise Warren (plot 142)

Three examples of the same veg – other

1st Denise Warren (plot 142)

2nd Gill Hiley (plot 50)

Five examples of different veg

1st David and Julia Lainchbury (plots 131f and 132b)

2nd Philip Smith (plot 80)

3rd Nick and Janet Baylis (plot 110f)

FRUIT CROPS

Three examples of apples or pears

1st Nicholas Martland (plot 99)

2nd David and Julia Lainchbury (plots 131f and 132b)

3rd Eve Blackwood (plot 151f)

Five examples of stone fruit

1st Denise Warren (plot 142)

Small plate of soft fruit

1st Helen Turner and Caroline Pritchett (plot 63)

2nd Eve Blackwood (plot 151f)

3rd Hilary Griffiths (plots 84 & 85)

FLOWERS

Mixed floral arrangement

1st Julia Lainchbury (plots 131f and 132b)

2nd Liz Rigge (plot 83)

3rd Emily Coates (age 13) (plot 142)

Three stems from a single plant

1st Denise Warren (plot 142)

2nd Christine Knight (plot 82)

3rd Liz and Gray Rigge (plot 83)

Mixed herbs in a jam jar

1st Julia Lainchbury (plots 131f and 132b)

2nd Jenny Bourne (plot 27f)

3rd Hilary Griffiths (plots 84 & 85)

YOUNG PLOTHOLDERS

Funny faces or ugly bugs

Age 6 or under

1st Freya Read (age 6) (plot 154)

Age 7-9

1st Robert Griffiths (age 8) (plots 84 & 85)

Age 10-11

1st Bethan Griffiths (age 10) (plots 84 & 85)

Plants in a recycled container

Age 7-9

1st Robert Griffiths (age 8) (plots 84 & 85)

Age 10-11

1st Jack Croft (age 10) (plot 73)

2nd Sophie Eddington (age 10) (plot 10f)

3rd Bethan Griffiths (age 10) (plots 84 & 85)

Picture gallery

Autumn Social and Produce Show, 11 September 2011



Showers, wind, sun – despite dodgy weather many said this was a most enjoyable day! Gazebos and a beer tent provided shelter from rain and the Beer tent and Raffle benefited from the huddlers! There was a brisk trade for home grown fruity offerings on the home produce stall, the bbq helpers worked tirelessly to feed the crowds, many hopefuls bought Raffle tickets for the generously donated prizes, the café volunteers worked non-stop to cater to the queues for hot drinks and delicious home-baked cakes, the cash tills were ringing! Younger plottolders enjoyed biscuit decorating and face painting in the children's tent. The Produce show judges had difficult decisions in selecting the top veg, fruit, floral displays and children's section – some fine entries as usual. And this year there were two monster pumpkins vying for the honours, shared between the biggest and the heaviest – NPL Officiator Andrew Hanson relished testing his measuring skills on these two! Prizes were given out by our local councillor, Tanya, who challenged Andrew to convert centimetres to feet and inches for the tallest sunflower competition winners.

This year everyone enjoyed the new category of Scariest Scarecrows and the entries were all brilliant – Beany Fingers, Good Morning Little Schoolgirl, 'Ello, 'Ello 'Ello, Scary and Weird Spice, and as for the living scarecrow, what a feat of endurance, a street performance career may beckon! Well done to all the young entries – we're looking forward to next year's characters!

Thanks to everyone who helped to set up and clear away, who helped on the Raffle, the bbq and the stalls and a huge thanks to the café volunteers who must have wondered what hit them! Many thanks to everyone who turned up and who contributed to making this a truly sociable and enjoyable afternoon. And lastly thanks to Sue, Joanie, Anne, Gaby, Sarah and Kristina, the Social Committee team whose energy and organisational skills make these events such a great RPA community highlight.

Jenny Bourne

Sue Croft – Channel Swimmer ... interviewed by Jenny Bourne

Plotholder Sue Croft is aiming to swim the Channel next year. I asked her about this daunting challenge, on Sunday 8 October on her plot.

Tooting Bec, a cold water pool – it's glorious, full of mad people! The cold helps with the cold water acclimatisation and I do long swims, but not as good as the sea. I swim 4 times a week in various pools when the Dover camp is closed.

uncontrollably – it takes a long time to get back to normal and you mustn't take a shower – Channel swimmer vets get dry, put on loads of warm layers, then go for a walk, looks mad in a woolly hat and a fleece on a July day! You must eat food slowly, bit by bit. The cold worries me the most, I'm too skinny – my winter project is to bulk up, with fat and muscle.



Tell me about the relay Channel swim last weekend

It was a huge team effort, with poor water visibility – no pool end, endless and very aware of big ships around, you're utterly dependent on the 3 team members in the boat being your eyes... you're literally putting your life in their hands. When you come out of the water (after an hour's swimming) it's like being a child, they get your

What are you most looking forward to?

Not having to drive down to Dover every weekend; not spending 6 – 8 hours in cold water every week!

How are you training now?

Winter training in the gym, working on speed and power. There's six months to get ready, then the Master Swimmer Club to get me swimming at Easter. I'm a little pit pony next to the race horses, but you need to be a plodder for Channel swimming.

What are you going to do?

I'm going to attempt a solo swim uninterrupted, from Samphire Ho Beach, Dover to Wissant Beach, near Calais, 21 miles as the crow flies but 30 miles to swim. It will take place in September, when the temperature will be up to 18°C and a lot more bearable.

swimsuit off, dry you, wrap you up in warm blankets and feed you. You feed every hour in the water, from a drinking bottle, either with a rope round and thrown to you or passed in a fishing net.

I asked her boys, Jack, 10 and Tom, 7, what they thought of their mum swimming the Channel –

Why?

A very good question. It's something I and other Dover swimmers always want to do. We're British, an island nation and the Channel is an iconic stretch of water.

The rules are that you cannot touch the boat or another person, you can only wear a swimsuit, goggles and one swim hat. You can't come out of the water and have to tread water when feeding. Salt burn in the mouth is a danger, you learn to breathe out through the mouth as there's a danger of salt in the system blowing your kidneys. Local, unpasteurised honey is the best thing for salt burn, a natural treatment for burns.

JACK said, "She's become a little crazy – Come on, we need to go for a swim! when we don't want to, we have to sit out in the cold for hours. She's not very good in the cold. The last time (the Channel relay swim) was really annoying. I was kept up 'til 11.30 waiting for her."

How are you preparing for it?

Most weekends I go to Dover harbour, where there's a training camp run by an amazing, 76 year old woman, Freda Streeter, known as 'the General'. She bosses us all about. Her daughter's swum the Channel 44 times. The camp takes place every weekend from May to September, in all weathers –

What are you not looking forward to?

Jellyfish. They're actually quite small in the Dover straits, tennis ball size and purple. Water visibility is so poor and they move very slowly. It's like stinging nettle stings; an antidote to stings is tomatoes, we found out in France, the acid neutralises the sting. The people in the boat have a whistle, they're constantly looking out for obstacles. Cold is another thing I don't like. Practice, practice, practice – I'm much better now. A year ago in Tooting pool the hypothermia made me shiver

TOM said, "I think she's going to do very good. The worst thing is she may get eaten by a shark. I'm a little bit worried. She swam to France, she started at 7 o'clock. We went to a fish and chip shop, I had sausage and chips. She said, 'It was a very tiring swim'. After I asked her what she saw and she didn't say anything because she was asleep!"

I think we're all in awe and will be supporting Sue all the way until next September. **Way to go, Sue!**



Sue's son Jack

we sit on the beach as there's no shelter. We swim for an hour, come to the water's edge for a quick cup of Maxim, a sugar drink, then back in to the water. This routine goes on for 6 – 8 hours. At home I swim for 4 hours most weeks at Hampton Pool, or at



Sue's son Tom



How to contact us:

You can leave mail for the Committee in the postbox in the shed by the gate.

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk