



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk  
email: info@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

No: 1 January 2017

## Editor's Note

First of all, a very Happy New Year to everyone, and let's hope for good gardening conditions this year. Once again, I have received a good selection of articles and photos from tenants – thanks to all contributors. This issue includes reports of events held late last year, as well as looking forward to the coming year; in particular see Wendy's note about the 2017 Open Day.

This is my chance to remind those of you who haven't yet paid their SAS subs for 2017 to do so. The subscription goes to support the Society, and a large part of it finances our membership to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens (NSALG) – which has a very useful website for member gardeners. Please use the payment slip at the back of this issue to make your payment.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this issue.

Lin Phillips, Editor

## Chairman's Notes

Once again, it's the start of a year and time to plan for a better season. Wet, dry, frosty - who knows? If the weather is not too bad and the ground not sticky, there's still the time to dig - warm work and a way of shedding the seasonal pounds. The roadways are very wet, so please try to avoid driving on them.

The project to erect a shed and wood store on SSO is now being led by Simon Nicolle, and soon volunteers for a working session will be called for, to move and lift things into place for the refurbishment to start - please be ready!

Over the winter months, volunteer tenant working parties have come together on some Sundays to tackle jobs such as path repairs, making wood chip containers, and coppice maintenance. These tasks have been identified by the committee, but the organisation has been done by Trish and Neil Kennedy - many thanks to them. Having served for the past few years, they now wish to hand over to a successor, and luckily, John Goffey has agreed to take on the role.

The committee has agreed to change the Society's accounting period to end at 31st December (instead of 31st October) and to hold the AGM at the end of January instead of in November. These changes are to allow time for the significant financial activities related to seed purchases to be incorporated into the accounts and to present them for discussion

Finally, there are still a few vacant plots on SSN.  
Good gardening,

John Eaton



Photo from Geoff Halls

### **Christmas drinks at the Tea Hut**

The weather was kind again for our al fresco Christmas drinks at Sunnyside – a time to pause, share a drink and a chat without worrying about not getting on with the gardening.

Thanks to everyone who helped, and especially to Cynthia for creating the delicious mulled wine, which kept us all warm. And thanks too to everyone who contributed bottles and a variety of tasty snacks.

I wrote in the Newsletter a year ago, “What about a choir next year?”. Well, this year we had a choir. Thanks to Rosemary and her choir, a group of friends who have established a tradition of singing carols at the Rex and the Rising Sun for charity, and who added to our festivities. We enjoyed singing familiar carols with them, and a neighbour commented how nice it sounded, wafting across the allotments. Just over £55 was raised for the Hospice.

I know there will be a little bit of digging, planting and weeding to be done before next December, but why not put the date in your diary now? – Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

Angela Wheeldon, B13



### **Open Day August 13th 2017**

As you may be aware, I have been assisting Angela in the task of co-ordinating our annual Open Day over the past few years. Angela has now stepped down from this role, and I am taking it on. She will be a very hard act to follow, as she did most of the planning and organising herself – with magnificent results, but a large burden for any one person.

So, although we have always had plenty of volunteers on the day, I am really hoping that some of you will step forward and help me with the preparation for the event. In particular, I would like someone to support me as deputy, someone to look after the publicity, and someone to look after the gazebos and furniture. If you have the expertise and/or the interest to help with these areas of responsibility or in any other way, please do get in touch. Closer to the time, I will be letting you have more details of the various aspects of the work involved and how we can bring it all together. Please help me to make this a successful day, so Angela can see she has left it in safe hands. Thank you,

Wendy Calder, N4C & D

**Please Note:** To offset rising printing costs, an electronic version of future editions of the newsletter will be sent to all those people that supply an email address to Jenny Sippings – ([jennysippings@virginmedia.com](mailto:jennysippings@virginmedia.com)).





### No More Rats?

We all know that rats decimate our crops and spread disease. They were responsible for the spread of bubonic plague in the Middle Ages, and again in 1994 in India. A study in New York in 2014 found that rats were carrying a host of viruses, including *C difficile* and hepatitis C. However, despite the invention of a range of fiendish poisons and traps over time, rats are still with us. They have been called the most successful species. Female rats ovulate every 4 days and remain fertile until they die. They copulate dozens of times a day, and if you leave them alone, two can become 15,000 in a year, according to scientists who are working on a new approach to controlling rat numbers.

But now, a company based in Arizona, Senestech, has produced a chemical called ContraPest, a liquid contraceptive which works by making male rats sterile. It is metabolised within the rat body within 10 minutes, so any predator that eats the rat is not affected. It causes no harm to the adult rat, which goes on to live out its life but without ever reproducing. Rats have to drink 30% of their body weight every day, so the chemical has been formulated to be a pink, viscous and sweet liquid, which is evidently irresistible to them.

There is a huge amount of interest in cities across the world in the work of these scientists to develop an effective alternative to dangerous poisons. It has even received an endorsement from the eminent scientist Stephen Hawking. After successful testing and US registration, ContraPest is to be made available to commercial markets in the US and Europe.

(information taken from "Man v Rat: a war without end?", The Guardian, Tuesday 20 September 2016)

### SAS Working Parties, 2017

The last two working parties of the new year will be held on 5 February, and 5 March, from 10am, with a soup lunch provided.

January's working party saw about 10 volunteers hard at work all morning to rebuild the boundaries of the woodchip and leaf mould piles on SSN. After a few hours of concerted graft, the materials are no longer spread all over the end of the car-park, and the retaining walls have been pulled back from the roadway and made safe. Please note there is plenty of woodchip and leaf mould, just waiting for your collection with a wheelbarrow to spread under your fruit canes and bushes, add to paths and compost, etc, so please help yourself.

And below, grateful thanks from the Wardens of Birtchnell's Copse (the wood above SSN) to the members of the November working party:

*I would just to say that we really appreciated the help of all those that came forward in November to assist our working party on Birtchnell's Copse. It was a very successful effort, which achieved a great deal, clearing the brambles and coppicing those sycamores and hazels which had rather taken over. We also tidied the area, opening up some of the walkways. Of course, still work to be done but we hope the bluebells and snowdrops all show their heads as springtime approaches and people enjoy walking around the Copse. The welcome soup lunch is always a bonus and we thank all those that helped to make the day a success, and best wishes for 2017!*

Diana and Andrew Calderwood



### FOR SALE. Wilson's Composted Horse Manure

**Surplus from a bulk purchase available at £5.95 per bag.  
(Wilson's retail price for small quantities is £7.95 per bag)**

**Contact: John Goffey, SSO B18 or tel: 01442-864967**

### Pruning Fruit Trees

A tenant who is a qualified gardener is kindly offering to give a demonstration on pruning fruit trees. She is a busy lady, so the date will depend upon her commitments. If you would be interested in taking part, please contact Clive Smith on 01442 865890 or [theharrymann@gmail.com](mailto:theharrymann@gmail.com).

## Troublesome Leeks

We aren't having much success with leeks, so we have been watching them carefully, and this autumn we saw something new. Someone was attacking them. Not only were the leeks small (as usual) but they seemed to be getting shredded. By the time we noticed what was going on, it was too late. We dissected the debris and found brown pupae about 2mm long, which you can see in the picture, but since then we have also found the odd maggot. A trip to the RHS web site found the answer: not a leek moth but an Allium leaf miner: a relatively new problem, which according to the RHS started around 2002. (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=643>)

There does not seem to be a solution, certainly no chemical solution, apart from stopping the female flies getting to the leeks in October/November by covering them with fleece/mesh.

The good news is that the onions and garlic which were growing next to the leeks were fine and the leeks further up our plot and on our neighbours' plots seem alright as well. So, it looks like the problem can be quite localised and probably time specific. Next year we will rotate our planting as usual and will cover up the leeks. And leeks were once such a trouble-free crop ....

Neil & Tricia Kennedy, C23 & B33B  
[neil@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:neil@sunnysideallotments.org.uk)



### Your Current Committee Members

<b>Chairman:</b>	John Eaton	865307
<b>Vice Chairman &amp; Newsletter Editor:</b>	Lin Phillips	862882
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jenny Sippings	865890
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Andy James	865061
<b>Minutes Secretary:</b>	Cynthia Fulks	879410
<b>Other members:</b>	Wendy Calder	767289
	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Kate Rankin	

You can email any member of the committee by putting their first name in front of: @sunnysideallotments.org.uk apart from John Eaton who is: johne@ and John Goffey who is: johng@

### Tenancy changes

#### Welcome to:

A37A	Kelly May
A40	Simon Hyde
B28	Stephen Johnson
B30C	Jane Wood
B33A	Susan Pratt
C17A	Will & Marsha Facey
C19	Fiona Naylor

#### Goodbye to:

A1A	Eva Reynolds
N1D	Katherine Shaw
N4	Vicki Daniels
N26	Sue Barnard
N40	Keith & Sue Brown
N42	Laila Walker
N55A	Paul Wood
N58	Tom Alexander
N60	David Atkinson

### Sunnyside Allotment Society Subs

Subs for 2016/2017 (£3.50) can be sent with this slip to Andy James (4 Field Way) or left at the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society please).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Plot Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ cash/cheque (please circle)