



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Note

Hi to all allotment holders, old and new. This issue of the newsletter has a great variety of contributions from tenants, I'm delighted to say – varied being the word; do look out for the advice for Death Eaters!

Also you will find a little background information on what usually takes place each summer at Sunnyside in the form of an Open Day, though sadly not this year. Instead, you will have had your invitation to a Summer Picnic on Sunday 15th August; a chance to catch up with the fellow gardeners you know and to welcome those who may be coming for their first Sunnyside event.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter, and perhaps it will inspire you to send in your own thoughts, for a future issue!

Lin Phillips

Editor, A18 lin@sunnysideallotments.org.uk 07835 623981

Chairman's Notes

Well, Covid seems to go on and on, and although precautions have been reduced, we cannot have a full-scale Open Day. I hope you have had your Summer Picnic invitation for Sunday August 15th, when tenants and their families will be able to swap tales of gardening success over refreshments. I hope that things will be back to normal in time for our annual Christmas drinks event.

Site access gates are now to be kept closed, which, I hope, will deter uninvited dumping. If you see any rogue depositing, including woodchip, please take details and report it.

My plot produce has proved really attractive to slugs, and I will not be bothering neighbours with excess courgettes this year. Even onions have had slug damage. But are we downhearted? - not while my broad beans flourish. As well as harvesting fruit and veg, please keep weed seeds under control as far as possible.

Deer continue to be a problem, and we are looking into whether a local, smaller scale fence/netting solution might work. Cost and effectiveness are the issues.

Dogs continue to be a nuisance, partly because of the extra walkers. The simple rule is to keep them on leads and pick up after them.

Allotment rents are likely to rise for next season because the council has chosen to reallocate some office costs. I hope it will continue to be a worthwhile activity.

Good gardening,
John Eaton



Slug on onion by John Eaton

Notes from a new Sunnysider

I was very fortunate to get my allotment in Feb 2020, just before the first lockdown. It was a very overgrown plot with a shed full of stuff to clear, as well as old wood, metal and wire littered around among the head-high nettles and thistles. The only plants I recognised were some raspberry bushes and fruit trees. A lot of hard work clearing and cutting followed in the first year, and at times it felt quite overwhelming.

After extensive Googling, and not wishing to use chemicals, I decided to cover the plot with weed membrane until I had time to clear it. It would also enable me to see the 'wood for the trees', or the 'ground for the weeds', think about a plan, and open up the plots gradually when I was able and ready to plant.

May this year saw my first foray into vegetable growing, playing it safe with veg that had a good track record for first-time veg growers like myself.

Already there are lots of potatoes (main crop) from seed potatoes, lettuce, beetroot, radishes, peas, beans and spring onion, as well as onions, all grown from seed - some direct and some of the salad veg started off in the cold frame at home and transplanted.

I was given some sweetcorn, broccoli and cabbage plants, which went in, and a courgette (from my next-door neighbour). Although there has been some slug and snail damage, it was far less on those planted in directly than those grown on the cold frame, which was a surprise.

Apart from one deer strike (I am pretty sure it was them due to the hoof marks and poo), they are all doing pretty well now I have put some netting in place to keep them at bay. We've already started to enjoy the produce - crisp, fresh lettuce straight from the ground. It was very clean from the ground, with no evidence of slugs and snails so far.

It has been gruelling at times, but rewarding, particularly now there will (hopefully) be more lovely veg for us to enjoy. During this difficult year, time out on the allotment - even just clearing and weeding - has been a tonic, with the fresh air and nature an antidote to the stresses of work and the restricted life we have had to lead. It's been really nice to meet other allotment-holders, too, and have a chat.

I'm looking forward to the coming year - now the foundations are in place to build on this year's results and plan for the coming year/growing season. I always wanted to grow veg and do more gardening, and having the allotment has been hugely gratifying and exceeded my own expectations in terms of what can be achieved.

Gardening programmes and articles provide inspiration, and there is now the opportunity and space to experiment and try different things, which the garden at home never allowed before. Most of all, it's given me the confidence to 'give things a go'.

Clare Donohue, N52



Lovely lettuces— Clare Donohue

Conserving Water

Water is a scarce resource, and we all need to do what we can on the allotment to use it effectively. We can keep moisture in the soil by mulching with woodchip, grass cuttings, or straw, or by adding manure or composted plant material, best while the soil is damp. Three to five inches depth will reduce water loss as well as suppressing weeds.

Plant seedlings in a shallow trough, which will hold back water when you are watering them. Regular hoeing will keep down the weeds that compete with your crops for available moisture. It also loosens the soil, and allows rain to penetrate instead of running off.

Every shed and greenhouse should have a water butt attached, with a gutter and downpipe to catch the rain. A watering can uses less water than a hose, and ensures the water is directed to the roots. Watering first thing in the morning or later in the evening will mean that less water is lost to evaporation.

You can use empty plastic bottles with the base cut off as funnels, sinking one into the ground as you plant each large, thirsty plant such as tomatoes or courgettes.

You can shade delicate seedlings from the heat of the sun by propping up a small screen of greenhouse mesh, or any material which will let the breeze through. A little ingenuity will go a long way!

Success with Elephant Garlic

We've had some great success with elephant garlic this year, a closer relation to leeks than garlic. Cloves sown end October and harvested end June. We used the scapes and made pesto, which goes great with some homemade pasta.

Tom and Gemma Hall, A25B



Tom with his elephant garlic



Garlic pesto



Pesto ingredients

Your Current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary & newsletter layout and production :	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	Andy James	865061
Newsletter Editor:	Lin Phillips	862882
Other members:	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Diana Ball	875277
	Geoff Halls	878176
	Kate Rankin	866827
	Jeanne Woodcraft	872852
	Steve Atkinson	

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@

Strimmer/Brushcutter for Sale, £50

Cobra BC260C petrol strimmer/brush cutter, 2-stroke engine – takes Aspen fuel. Hardly used. Blades, harness and attachments included.

Contact Lin Phillips, 07835 623981.

Sunnyside Open Days

For the benefit of new tenants, just a word about Open Day - cancelled again this year due to Covid. Our annual Open Day has several functions: to raise the profile of the allotments and let the public visit, enjoy and explore this beautiful site, and also to raise funds for our Sunnyside Allotment Society.

To that end, we have a range of stalls selling plants, tools, and produce - jams, chutneys, fruit and vegetables - as well as teas and home-made cakes, and a raffle. Money raised previously has funded such projects as the renovation of the toilet on Sunnyside Old and the building of our communal storage shed.

As can be imagined, all this takes a great deal of planning, which starts months earlier, with publicity around the town, growing of plants to sell, and organising the team of volunteers to help on the day. This year, because of Covid restrictions and uncertainty, the planning and preparations could not be done in time.

But in ordinary times, visitors to our Open Days can go home after a pleasant day out, with a new plant or some fresh produce, and perhaps having been inspired to get a plot themselves. So, let's all hope for a better Open Day than ever next year!

Kate Rankin, Open Day Co-ordinator, A9



Open Day 2019

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

Linda Sanders	A1A
Sarah Hukins	A27A
Jennifer Main	A27B
Stuart Simmonds	A34A
Lauren Clarke	A34B
Jennie Peachey	N4C,D
Mark Barnett	N41A
Helen Harker	N41B
Lucy Evans O'Neill	N50

Goodbye to:

Russell Evans	A1A
Fred Jackson	A27
Mark Evans	A34
Peter Kelly	A44B
Graham Clare	N4C,D
Anthony Burchett	N41
Eve Martin	N50
Lucy Evans O'Neill	N67

Allotments for Death Eaters

By "Voldemort"

Whilst those repulsive Green Wizards like nothing more than to work in harmony with nature and cultivate wild-life-friendly havens for organic fruit and vegetables, I expect an awful lot more from my minions, who should be operating a scorched earth policy at all times.

As an absolute basic minimum, I expect you to indulge in extreme over-use of the harshest possible chemicals, which are guaranteed to destroy any sign of life and eliminate all hideous green grass and leaves in the vicinity. Ideally, these chemicals – Round-up springs to mind as a good option for my slaves - should be applied in mid-Spring, just when butterflies, bees and other insects are laying eggs and birds are nesting. IT IS YOUR DUTY AS AN AGENT OF EVIL TO JUST KILL THEM ALL!!

Hot Tip: Poison or chop down flourishing nettles (a disgustingly useful plant with all kinds of horrible health benefits) in April/May to make sure peacock butterflies are short of places to lay their eggs. In doing so, you will also eliminate undesirable natural fertilisers from the plot of land you wish to destroy.

Once all signs of life have been eliminated, I order you to make a rubbish dump out of your allotment, preferably with rusting metals, sharp, dangerous objects, broken glass, old nets, and plastic bottles which animals can crawl into – especially old bottles of Round-Up. With any luck, you'll be able to help finish off a few endangered species in this way, such as small voles or dormice.

Anything which helps kill off birds is obviously textbook material for Dark Wizards who've been charged with allotments. Remember, my slaves, that poisonous slug pellets are your best friend.

Look out for more orders in future bulletins.
Charlotte, C25

How to be a good neighbour in 5 easy steps

- Keep weeds down to prevent them blowing all over other tenants' plots.
- Never leave your hosepipe lying out in communal areas where someone else can trip – and make sure the tap is turned off when you've finished watering.
- Keep stones off paths, to prevent damage to mowers, and keep your own paths mowed and edged. Overgrown weeds and brambles can prevent others walking safely along the paths (and if you have a neighbour who kindly goes round and mows your path, perhaps a contribution to the cost of a gallon of petrol would be appreciated now and then).
- Be aware of safety hazards and remove any sharp metal stakes, ragged corrugated sheets, etc. – and take any non-organic rubbish home to dispose of in your bin.
- I can't think of another one, and anyway the above tips have multiple messages!



Photos from Steve and Debbie N33



Lily in Annick's allotment pond, N48

Seed Order 2021

It is time to start thinking about seeds – will you try something new next year?

As you are aware, plot-holders who paid the subscription fee by the end of May to become full members of our Sunnyside Allotment Society are also affiliates of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). This entitles them to take advantage of the seed ordering scheme which NSALG arranges in conjunction with Kings Seeds (www.kingsseeds.com). A look at this website shows the prices to be very competitive compared with the likes of Suttons, Thompson and Morgan, etc., and as affiliates we get a further 40% discount (the prices in the catalogue reflect this discount). The catalogue also contains a lot of useful information regarding planting tips, etc.

How does the scheme work? I distribute the catalogues and order forms when I receive them, normally by early September. I ask you to return your order and payment to me by the end of October. Seeds are usually delivered to me in December – I will let you know when they have arrived, and you collect them from me. Potato orders are received in January – again, you collect from me. Fruit plants are generally delivered to you directly – so make sure you put your address on the order form. As a Society we get additional discounts – these become part of the income for SAS, and the more we order, the more we benefit. This enables us to fund projects around the site – and this will be very useful this year, as without our Open Day we have lost a major source of income for the Society.

I look forward to receiving your orders.
Andy James, N57

Goodbye to Fred Jackson A27

Although no one is quite sure when Fred began as a tenant at Sunnyside (his daughter Ann thinks it might have been as long as 60 years ago), he has surely been the longest-standing member for a number of years and has held plots on Old and New. Now the time has come, and Fred has retired from his remaining plot - but not without the good wishes of many a neighbour; below are some of the things he will be remembered for:

"I don't know the exact year that Fred first took an allotment but he told me it was over 40 years ago - at least 5 years ago...!.

I was intrigued by his life experiences. I first met Fred and Joan when sharing a section of Debbie and Mossy's allotment with Kate and Philippa. Fred had two neighbouring plots and we all got to know each other. I found him encouraging and helpful. It was Fred who told me to get half an allotment as it would be plenty for my needs. Very good advice.

As a young man he did his apprenticeship at Hog Lane Farm. At the time that encompassed all the land that lies within Northchurch Lane, Hog Lane and John's Lane. The property was then owned by an Anglo Austrian Count Antoine Seilern who bred pigs. The Count was a kind and generous man, always introducing his staff to any visitors. Projects also included collecting the base of a decommissioned artillery gun - used to build a revolving sun house - and digging a swimming pool.

The Count had another property in Princes Gate, South Kensington with an extensive art collection. When he died, the majority of his collection was donated to the Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House in London.

Fred also worked on the teams that built many of the major 20th century infrastructure projects that we all take for granted now: the motorways and the Channel Tunnel at the UK end. He commented that he was the only one who went back to his wife at the weekend.



Fred 2005

Fred was generous with his time and mechanical digging skills, saving the town council a considerable amount of money, when plumbing for the water tanks and fencing were installed on SSO and SSN."

Deirdre B11A

"I don't know when he took on allotments, but Fred just seemed to have been around for ever! He often used to mention that he had at one stage been driving around the country for work, and had 4 full allotments! We were just in awe of the work involved. And Joan must have been very busy dealing with all the produce. Fred was always very friendly to us, and we always enjoyed a chat together. We tried to glean hints from him, and he was always very careful not to comment on our novice attempts at running an allotment. He was, though, very pleased at the way we dealt with the bindweed which covered our allotment when we took it over!"

Jenny and Richard, A25



Fred—last day on his allotment—Sarah Vaux

"Fred was always ready to stop for a chat about garden matters; his big contribution to the allotments was as a digger driver, when the water system for Old and New was replaced."

John Eaton A3

"Fred started at Sunnyside allotments at least fifty years ago, probably a lot more. He was a professional gardener when young, and combined this knowledge with hard work and years of experience to become the most competent grower of fruit and vegetables at Sunnyside. Fred was also very good at the practicalities of the allotments, like building a tamper-proof shed, and erecting fences that rabbits and foxes could not burrow under. Some years ago, Fred used his skill as a plant operator to dig the trenches for the replacement water system at Sunnyside.

Like many older allotment-holders, he liked to get on with the proper gardening: over the years many people learned a great deal from him".

Chris, A22

Fred will always be welcome to visit Sunnyside, of course, and we wish him and Joan all the best in the future.



Photos from the Sunnyside website (taken by Clive, Jenny and Angela). Above Fred driving the digger for the 2007 water project. Left digging a trench for the rabbit fencing along side the railway embankment. 2006 Below working on the Middle road way Sunnyside New 2004.



Relaxing at the tea hut 2007



Masterminding the toilet base 2005

Watch out for Tomato Blight

The rains followed by sun have meant the early arrival of tomato blight this year. If you see large brown patches on the stems of your tomatoes, you have probably got the blight. The answer is to cut out all infected stems, or even the whole plant – the potatoes will be fine, in the ground, if the blight is caught in time. You may stop it spreading to the rest of your crop, and your neighbours will thank you for not passing it on.

Neil Kennedy, C23

Plot inspections

These usually take place 3 times per year, though Covid stopped this process for a few months last year. However they have resumed this year. Two members of the Committee walk around the site and note allotments on which there is little sign of cultivation, or where plots are untidy or dangerous. The Committee is required to report their findings to the Council. However the Council has speeded up the process of inspection, warning and eviction, so it will now send out a warning letter and then termination will follow quite quickly if action is not taken by the tenant (there is an appeals process). So if you are in any temporary difficulty, please take action early, and notify a member of the Committee so that the inspecting team is informed.



Nets by Jeanne Woodcraft



Lovely harvest, by Steve and Debbie, N33



A1A—before and after. Many thanks to Neil Webb N42 for clearing this plot ready for a new tenant.



All Sunnyside tenants are cordially invited to a

Summer Picnic

on

Sunday 15th August

12.30—2.30

on B18 Sunnyside Old

Please bring your own food and chairs

*Wine, beer and soft drinks will be
provided*

(There will be a box for cash donations to SAS funds)

RSVP by email so we can plan for the event

NB: This event is subject to weather and Covid rules and will be confirmed closer to the date. For tenants and their families only.

