



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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There's a slight hint of Spring with snowdrops and bulbs poking through but I'm trying to resist sowing seeds which I know will just grow into poor leggy things before I can safely get them out. Don't know how much longer I'll hold out though as the smell of tomato seedlings is particularly tempting. Perhaps I'll just follow Frieda's sensible suggestions below – I could always have tomato seedlings in my sandwiches.

Chris Locke

## From our chairman:

### Microveg

You may have noticed little pots of microveg in the shops. There are also kits of propagators for your windowsill with dear little mats to grow the seeds on. They are the old fashioned mustard and cress by another name and reputed to be full of micronutrients and bulging with anti-oxidants. As far as I am concerned they are very fresh - pot to plate in 10 seconds and they do not look as if they have had a long journey from foreign parts like lettuce does at this time of year.

I have been experimenting growing cress, red cabbage, mustard, rocket and radish and I have come up with a method using recycled materials that works without either giving you egg-and-grit sandwiches or poor shrivelled little corpses which have dried out because you did not water them every day.

First find a plastic tray with no drainage holes. I find the green ones from tomatoes are good. Try to get them in pairs, one for the plants and one to cover – they are better with the light excluded. Then put 1cm of potting compost and cover with a double layer of kitchen roll folded to fit. Water it by pouring water in at the corner and pressing down the kitchen roll to get it wet. Put your hand on the kitchen roll to stop the soil falling out and pour off excess water. Sprinkle the seed on. I find it best to keep varieties separate.

Put on the lid to keep the soil moist and put it somewhere warm to germinate. Until you get the hang of it you will need to keep an eye on them so they are not too wet or too dry. After they germinate they will grow up looking for light and when they are tall enough take the lid off and put them in the light so that they produce leaves. Cut them with scissors and put them into sandwiches or into stir fry at the last minute as garnish. As soon as you have cut the crop pull off most of the roots and paper and flop the soil over into the lid burying the remains of the paper and roots.

Put on another layer of kitchen roll as before and start again. Four trays on the go all the time have provided our two person household with salad for our lunchtime sandwiches since well before Christmas. It seems possible to keep re-using the soil in this way many times as it is not providing much in the way of nutrition. I will let you know in the next edition how long it lasts.

I experimented using scraps of felted cloth but that did not do so well, seeds sown just onto paper dried out and the soil grown ones were very gritty.



### Amino-pyralid

We talked about this at the AGM. I can point you in the direction of three websites giving between them a balanced view. Because we are such a big site we cannot do centralised provision of manure and it is up to you individually to make sure that the manure you buy is unaffected.

The three sites are the manufacturer, the Government site and Wikipedia

<http://www.dowagro.com/uk>

<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aminopyralid>

## Lettings

Not many people gave up at Christmas this year which is good news for the allotments as it means that the community is getting more stable. Those of you on New who have been unhappy about the group of plots at the bottom of the centre roadway will be pleased to know that they have now been let. It has been hard going but I think things should look a lot better now. It is bad news for people on the waiting list though and means that I may be looking harder at some of the plots which are just about good enough when I have let the few remaining vacant plots. I could not justify evicting people when we have unlettable plots. As always, if you are having trouble or need time off please let me know and if you feel like reducing your holding, please tell me before you start feeling that you have a weight on your conscience about it.

## Tenancy changes

Welcome to:

<i>Old</i>	
A18	Lin Phillips
A31A	Geoff Hall
<i>New</i>	
54	Tracy Jenkins
64B	Adam Connors
65	Jane Thompson
66	Kevin Bownes

## Sunnyside Calendars

There are still a few 2010 calendars left. These can be bought from Jenny Sippings (82 George Street 865890) or Angela Wheeldon (10 Chapel Street, or the Tea Hut B15 874440). The calendars cost £5.50 each and feature fruit).



## Working Parties

### Sunday 6th March

We need your help on this day, when it is hoped to concentrate on painting the summerhouse and plot number signs. The bigger the group, the more work we can get done. A light lunch will be provided.

**Leaf mould** is the new peat. There are now two new bins on Sunnyside New where leaves will be deposited. After two years leaves should provide wonderful leaf mould.

**Water leaks:** about 80 cubic metres of water was lost on Sunnyside New because of a leak. During the winter the stopcock is turned off and should not be turned on. (Is someone fish-farming?)

**Ray Phipps** has offered to give advice to new/inexperienced ploholders and he has also agreed to run a short course in digging. (Sounds like a novel way to get your plot dug...)

### How to dig without breaking your back!

There is more to digging than sticking a fork into the ground.

A well dug plot is a joy and it produces better crops. For any newcomer who wishes to learn how to dig effectively and with comparative ease Ray Phipps is running a digging course on Saturday morning March 5th. Just meet at the tea hut on Sunnyside Old at 10.30 am. Bring your fork and spade and a bucket for weeds. Ray will demonstrate the basic art and then it will be your turn.

## Your current Committee Members

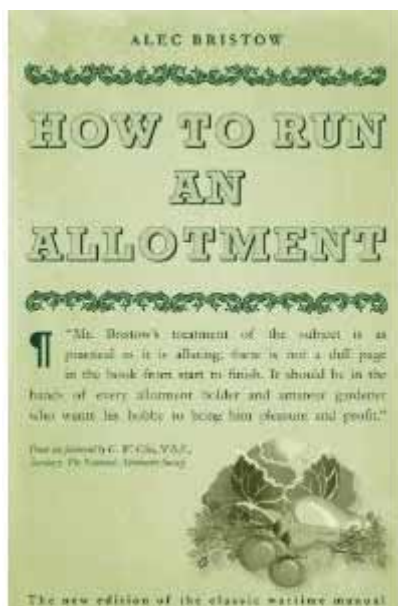
<b>Chairman:</b>	Freda Earl	865661
<b>Vice Chairman:</b>	John Eaton	865307
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jenny Sippings	865890
<b>Treasurer:</b>	John Powell	878640
<b>Minutes Secretary:</b>	Prue Schofield	878559
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Chris Locke	877326
<b>Other members:</b>	Debby Figueirido	877607
	Nick Hood	878331
	Annick Mulcahy	862572
	Andy Walker	07966 245732
	Angela Wheeldon	874440
<b>Associate member:</b>	John Driver	862734

**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 – ([jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com](mailto:jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com)).

## How to run an allotment

Jenny Sippings spotted this advert in the latest edition of the NSALG magazine.

First published in 1940 when allotments were of vital importance to our country's war effort, this is a gentle reminder of times gone by...as relevant today as it was then.' *Allotment and Leisure Gardener*, issue 3, 2010  
Alec Bristow's famous wartime book on allotment gardening has been lovingly reissued in its original format by Beautiful Books. Hardback book with 224 pages of text, line illustrations and with complete instructions on when, where and how much to plant.



The Dig for Victory wartime campaign spurred Britain's population on to an enthusiastic and nationwide drive to grow our own food. Now, with the chill winds of the recession close behind us, many families have once more signed up for the practical benefits and sense of spiritual wellbeing which comes from growing one's own vegetables and flowers in an urban allotment. Alec Bristow's 1940 book was the classic of the period, and encouraged thousands of families to take up the hobby.

STOP PRESS: Readers of *Allotment and Leisure Gardener* magazine:

Don't forget to use the voucher code: **ALLOTMENT** when you are in the shopping basket and we'll give you free P&P.

Price £6.99, available from Beautiful Books, Allotment Offer, 36-38 Glasshouse Street, London, W1B 5DL (cheque payable to Beautiful Books Ltd or buy it directly from their website: <http://www.beautiful-books.co.uk/alec-bristow/52-how-to-run-an-allotment.html>)

## Seeds of Italy

Jane Dickinson suggests a visit to 'Seeds of Italy' and particularly to one of their open days: "They are in Harrow, and walking distance from Harrow and Wealdstone station so easily accessible from Berko.

The open day dates are:

Saturday 12th February 14:00 - 17:00. Spring shopping afternoon

Saturday 26th March 10:00 - 16:00 Spring seed shopping day

Saturday 2nd April 10:00 - 16:00. Spring open day. It distinctly

mentions coffee and biscuits for this one!

Free entry and allotment associations welcome.

Address is Unit 1A Phoenix industrial estate, Rosslyn Crescent, Harrow, HA1 2SP

[www.seedsofitaly.com](http://www.seedsofitaly.com) for more information

They do gardening, preserving and cookery courses which all look interesting.

They will do discounts for large orders from allotment associations which might be worth bearing in mind. I've always found their seeds very reliable, but they also do soap, preserving equipment, coffee and lots of other interesting Italian things. When I've met their folk at shows they have always been very friendly and I think it would be a worthwhile trip."





## Christmas drinks

It seems a long time ago but the weather was kind for the Christmas drinks and a good number of people came in spite of many of them having to walk because they were snowed in. As we have come to expect, there was a range of excellent edibles and very tasty mulled wine and we even had heating. Stripey was not sure about the fruit cake; he really does prefer sponge.



**Allotment society subscriptions for 2010/2011** are now overdue. If you're not sure whether you've paid yet you can check with John Powell on 01442 878640. One advantage of being a paid-up member of the society is that you can take part in the 'seed scheme'.

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### Sunnyside Allotment Society Subs

Subs for 2010/2011 (£3.00) can be sent with this slip to John Powell (20 Castle Hill Avenue) 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)