



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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email: info@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

No: 3 July 2011

## Weeds grow the fastest and last the longest (Danish proverb)

I was ruminating about weeds recently (as well as pulling up quite a few) and trying to recall the rather depressing proverb on the subject. In the end I resorted to Google and found not only the one I was looking for but many, many more. It seems that 'One year's seeding makes seven years weeding' is of Portuguese origin. A Finnish one was new to me: 'To an optimist every weed is a flower; to a pessimist every flower is a weed.' I'll stop after just two more: a Scottish one, suitably dour: 'A man o' words and no' deeds, is like a garden fu' of weeds' and a rather puzzling, apparently mean-spirited one from China: 'A man's greatest shortcoming is that he neglects his own field and weeds that of others.'

**Chris Locke**

### From our chairman:

#### *Right of access to the allotments*

The matter of the right to seek permission for vehicle access continues slowly and somewhat erratically.

The next council meeting dealing with the matter will be F & P. They set up a subcommittee to deal with the matter. John Eaton and I were (at last) invited to meet the sub committee consisting of Cllrs Peter Mathews, Garrick Stevens and Fiona Macdonald. In the event time constraints meant that the meeting was held at a time when two of the sub committee members were away. They were to be substituted by Cllrs Laws and Collins actually just Cllr Laws. Although this meeting was intended as an opportunity for the councillors to tell us what they were doing we actually had a constructive discussion with a lot of positive points made on both sides.

After some persuasion we were granted sight of the report to be submitted by the subcommittee, which was to be secret until the F & P agenda is published. As the report was written by people who were not present at our meeting there are differences which will come to light at the proper time. But I can say that the report is in our view less positive than the discussion.

There has been a little confusion about the pedestrian right of access. This is not and never has been in any doubt. It has been the view of successive Town Councils and the SAS agrees, that having people walking on the site is good for our security. If one of our neighbours walks through the site late at night or early in the morning it makes the site, which cannot be locked to keep it safe, much less likely to be seen as a deserted place for anyone up to no good.

#### *The Beast of Sunnyside*

We have had a number of visits from a large black Labrador looking for food. (it is a Lab after all). The dustbin by the Tea Hut was taken away bodily and not found until the day after Ted had bought a new one. The old one turned up in the plum trees almost as far as C road. The new bin had B15 painted on it and the lid wired down and the whole thing secured by a galvanised stake through the handle. It's a big powerful dog and made short work of such puny measures and removed some of the painted number in its effort to get in.

It seems to come at night but has been seen at mid day and Sunnyside Rural Trust staff tried to catch it and thought better of it because of its size.

We want to know where it comes from and keep it off the site. Please do not tackle it. It is not aggressive but seems to bark and run away. If a dog which is a bit nervous finds itself trapped then that is when it may bite to defend itself. We wish it no harm but we do not want it loose on the site.

A thought – is it better to have a visible dog turd on your best lettuce or to have it peed on and not know?

#### *Wildlife on the allotments*

It has been a good year for wildlife in general.

The SAS's work on the bee and butterfly garden by the Grantham Mews gate is paying off. The flowers have been abundant especially in the early part of the year when nectar sources in the vegetable plots are few. Now, in midsummer it looks very colourful and is a delightful welcome to Sunnyside. Thanks to the volunteers who created and maintain it. It has exceeded our hopes.

The work on the upper edge of the car park on New with the brambles being pruned back has produced a border of pre-existing flowers. None of them spectacular yet but they will improve. This is intended to replace something of the habitat lost to cultivation over the last few years without taking up useable allotment space and to provide a wildlife corridor to link the SRT's areas to the hedge in Ivy House Lane which is very species poor at present. Our intention to seed more wildflowers in the spring was thwarted by the drought but there are some seedlings ready for the autumn. This is not intended to be any sort of flower bed like Grantham mews. The only cultivation will be to keep the bramble pruned to provide good crops of free blackberries to tenants and to act as a visual barrier to people peering over the gate so that they do not realise there is allotment land with crops to steal and green houses to throw stones at. The flowers and plants along the edge, once established, are intended to look after themselves and to be well mannered. Nothing with wind-borne seeds to plague the plot holders. The tenant on the uphill side of the hedge is fully involved and blackberries are only for general tenants on the car park side.

We shall be sowing honesty, foxgloves, ox eye daisies and phacelia as soon as the soil is wet enough. Although many of the most useful wildlife supporting plants are not particularly attractive in them selves and easily get classified as boring weeds we hope that by adding these others we shall get the best of both worlds

Birds in open country in times of drought have been underweight and with low fledgling survival weights, the fact that there is watering on the allotments seems to have kept “our” birds going although we shall not know until Stuart Downhill’s nest box team have reported.

The whitethroats have been back this year and several males have been singing on both new and old. The male whitethroat builds several nests and then goes in search of a female. He entices her by fluttering about in a bush and if she is impressed with his charm she will inspect the nests. If none are suitable she will build another one – properly this time. There was a male next to the tea hut who found the most gorgeous female and spent ages fluttering up to her. He did not get anywhere which is not surprising as it was his own reflection in the summer house windows that he had fallen in love with.

The green woodpeckers have a good brood of fledglings seen flying about. The thrushes are still doing well thanks to more widespread use of wildlife friendly ferrous sulphate slug killers. (Growing Success came out in the Gardening Which tests as being as effective as the old copper sulphate ones.) The problem with them was that they paralysed the slugs mouth-parts so that they starved to death but in the meantime were walking around for several days (are you feeling guilty). In that time they were eaten by thrushes which are a natural and beneficial slug control. The copper got into the bird’s system and cause them to lay eggs with very thin shells which shattered when the birds tried to brood them (now are you feeling guilty?). That’s why the thrush population plummeted a few years ago. The early substitute slug killers were not as good as the old ones but thankfully people persevered and now the new ones are fine.

The lizards enjoyed the hot dry weather. They like an exposed rock to warm themselves in the sun but a lump of wood or a wheelbarrow will do just as well. If on a hot day you see a sudden movement as something shoots away from a sunny patch it is probably a lizard. Frogs and toads who are also on the volunteer staff of pest exterminators are more likely to be under the rock. Either way when the autumn comes and they hide in compost heaps and bonfire please check before you burn them alive.

Stripey the cat does his bit for the birds by catching some of the rats which otherwise feast on birds eggs. If you are thinking of getting a kitten it is a good idea to play with them with a string along the ground NOT up in the air. This seems to habituate them so that they become mousers not birders. Alternatively train them to chase magpies which have just emptied the blackbird’s nest in my garden yet again.

**Freda Earl**



### Sunnyside Picnic

The picnic was a select group of four when I arrived although other people had been there earlier. The food was various from a bag of chips bought at the station to beautifully prepared salad. Angela’s Eton Mess which I shared was utterly delicious. It was a very pleasant end to the day and we enjoyed it a lot, but Allotment Society event it was not.

A lot of people said “Oh was it today?” Yes it was and it was in the newsletter which many of you are very busy not reading and it came as an e-mail reminder and a super poster on the tea hut table and notice boards..

**What do we have to do to make you aware of this or other events?** This is not an exasperated remark – we really would like to know how to attract your attention.

What do **you** have to do to make sure you are not missing things?

First check that we have an up to date e-mail address or phone number. (No we cannot ring round all our members to remind them but a current phone number would often be useful.) If you are not available on line could you arrange for someone who is to mention things to you and remind you?

The last question is do you want things like the picnic or the barbecue or are your lives already too crammed with other things? Please tell us.

**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)).

### 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

### Vera Chambers (plot 17 SN) writes:

Grateful thanks to all whose concern and support helped me through my recent troubles, especially the 'angel' who cut down all my hay!

Little did I think when I became an allotment tenant that I was entering such a caring community. I am most touched. You will be pleased to know that I am up now but not running yet!

### On offer

Julie Everitt who lives at 146 George Street has asked if anyone who has an allotment at Sunnyside would like some summer fruiting raspberry plants. They would need to be dug up from her back garden for transplanting. They are young plants -grown from runners from next door's garden - and she wants to get rid of them. If anyone is interested please call Julie on (M) 07810 751269.

**John Powell the Society's Treasurer** reports he would welcome from members any suggestions entailing expenditure that they would like considered by the committee. A rough estimate of the amount involved would be appreciated. His email address is [anne.jo@btinternet.com](mailto:anne.jo@btinternet.com).

### Sad news

We are sorry to tell you that Spiros Papadopoulos Taylor died this week. The funeral is for family only but Joyce is making arrangements for a memorial service which will take place on Wednesday 3rd August at 4pm at Sunnyside Church.

### Seed order

If you paid your subs for Sunnyside Allotment Society then you should receive your seed catalogue and letter during August or early September.

### Who mows your paths?

If it is not you, then it is probably your allotment neighbour or some other kind soul. **Please do not take them for granted.** They might appreciate a break from mowing. Don't forget **all tenants** are required to keep their paths mown. If you have difficulty doing this then you need to talk to other tenants or the committee to come to an arrangement.

It is also the responsibility of all tenants to keep the paths bordering their plots clear and to remove stones or any other obstacles that could cause a hazard to others and damage mowers.

### Water Conservation

Water is a precious and finite resource. We owe it to future generations to use it responsibly. Don't just water as a matter of routine. For best effect, water your crops according to their actual requirements. Using a hose to water can result in loss of water. On a hot day about 25% of water can be lost to evaporation before it reaches the ground. But a hose delivering large drops is less prone to water loss than one which delivers a fine spray. Help to conserve water by applying the right amount of water at the right time in the right place in the right way. Wise watering involves applying water slowly, at a rate that it can be absorbed by the soil, deeply and directly to the roots, and infrequently. In other words, a good soaking occasionally rather than little and often.

Watering with a pressure hose can be wasteful. Much water will evaporate before it reaches the soil and more will evaporate from the soil surface. But a hose can really take the hard work out of watering by filling a series of watering cans in situ, so that they don't have to be carried far. If you use a hose, consider fitting a trigger nozzle to control the flow. If you can water early or late in the day, less water will be lost in evaporation, as the temperature is lower, humidity is higher and the air is calmer. To do well, plants need to send their roots down deep in search of water and nutrients. Deep roots help plants to endure drought better. Frequent surface watering encourages the roots up towards the moisture where they are at risk in hot dry periods.

It is beneficial to direct your watering to where it is required. This is especially important in the case of thirsty plants such as tomatoes and courgettes which require copious watering. Recycle plastic litre drinks bottles for this purpose. Simply cut out the base and stick the neck into the ground near the plant. Water into the bottle and it will go straight to the roots with no evaporation. Watering around plants rather than over the leaves in very hot, sunny weather avoids scorching. It is easier to judge how much water is being given to individual plants when using a watering can. It is also easier to really soak an area such as the runner bean row using a watering can. Many of us can take advantage of the slope in order to siphon water into our water butts from which we can fill our cans. With judicious siting of butts, you are never very far from a water source.

You can read the full article on our website: [http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/Downloads/water\\_tips.pdf](http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/Downloads/water_tips.pdf)



## SCARECROW COMPETITION

**Open Day Sunday 14 August, 2011**

We have decided to hold a scarecrow competition again this year, as both tenants and visitors alike enjoy seeing your creations. This year we will only have one class, but the age of the entrant will be taken into account when judging. The theme for this year is **20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> Century Celebrity** eg politician, film star, pop star, sportsman, royalty or a fictional character.

### Competition Guidelines

There will be one overall prize for the **best scarecrow** and there may be additional prizes.

There will be an entry fee of £1 per scarecrow. The scarecrows should be in place on your plot by the evening of Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August, ready for judging on the following day. The judges' decision is final.



The scarecrows will be judged on the following criteria:

- they should be homemade (and your child's own work as far as possible);
- they should be fit for purpose;
- they should show imaginative use of materials, especially evidence of recycling;
- the name of the celebrity should be displayed.

### SCARECROW COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

Name:.....

Phone No: .....

Address: .....

Plot No: ..... Age (if child): .....

I enclose my entry fee of £1 per scarecrow ☐

Closing date for entries: 7<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Completed forms should be returned to Angela (10 Chapel Street or the Tea Hut on B15). Extra forms will be available on the website or from the Tea Hut.

## Untidy Gardens

The allotment reps inspect allotments three times a year. We are sympathetic to problems. A list of those needing warning letters is handed to the council. No one likes being inspected. We do not want the plots to be highly manicured but they cannot be allowed to go back to 'rough', **paths must be cared for and weeds must not be allowed to seed all over neighbouring gardens.**

If you are finding it difficult to cultivate the whole of your plot you can reduce your holding. Please talk to the council about it or Freda Earl or John Eaton on our committee. Until now some tenants who have started the year enthusiastically and then find the pressures of work too much have had a council letter but then have managed to tidy up sufficiently to avoid eviction and can carry on without worry. This will not continue in future. If the same happens the next year, the next letter will be cumulative.

This is the Town Council's agreed process:

**Letter 1.** A warning; stating that the plot is not being kept in a "good state of cultivation and fertility" in accordance with the contract and must be brought up to a suitable standard within one month to avoid eviction.

**Letter 2.** A second warning after one month; stating that there has been failure to reach the required standard so far and if there is no improvement within one month, steps to eviction will take place.

**Letter 3.** Eviction letter after one month; stating eviction will take place in 30 days and all equipment must be removed.

**Remember** the letters are cumulative from year to year.



Visiting artists



# Sunnyside Allotment Society

## OPEN DAY SUNDAY 14th AUGUST 2011

Our Open Day takes place on Sunday 14th August from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., to enable local residents to visit and enjoy the allotments, with sales of produce, preserves and refreshments. There will also be guided walks around the sites and a Scarecrow Competition. Visitors enjoy spotting the scarecrows, so please be creative and enter the competition.

Please try to cut your paths so that they are tidy, bramble free and accessible to the public. The contractors will be cutting the main roadways during the week before Open Day; to enable them to do a full width cut, please ensure the end of your plot bordering the roadway is cut back as far as possible. We want to make the sites look attractive, and it would be nice if you could spend some time on your plot during that day to give visitors a warm welcome and talk about your garden.

## PRE-OPEN DAY JOBS

There are a number of tasks which need doing before the day: cleaning furniture, displaying signs, mowing and strimming of paths and general tidying up of communal areas. Any offers of help will be gratefully accepted. Please contact Angela on 01442 874440 or leave a note at the tea-hut including your phone number.

## VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

We will also need volunteers to man the produce and refreshment stalls and the raffle. Please return the completed form to Angela Wheeldon (10 Chapel Street or B15) or email to: [jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com](mailto:jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com). We can then draw up a rota to share the tasks out. Could you also let us know if you are able to provide any contributions (see form below). Plants and preserves need to be delivered to B15 on Friday or Saturday and fresh veg/cakes **before 10.00 a.m.** on Sunday.

✂-----  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Plot No: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Pre Open Day help:

I can help with: \_\_\_\_\_ Please let us know when: \_\_\_\_\_

### I can help at the following time(s) on Open Day (please tick the box).

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9.00.-11.00 a.m. (setting up) | <input type="checkbox"/> 11.00.- 12 noon                | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 noon - 1.00 p.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00.- 2.00 p.m.              | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00.- 3.00 p.m.               | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.00 .- 4.00 p.m.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4.00.- 5.00 p.m.              | <input type="checkbox"/> 5.00.- 6.00 p.m. (clearing up) | <input type="checkbox"/> anytime             |

I will provide:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> cakes/biscuits for the refreshments | <input type="checkbox"/> produce/preserves to sell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> plants/flowers to sell              | <input type="checkbox"/> other                     |

Please return this form by **Friday 5th August**. Thank you.