



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

4/2006

This is the Autumn newsletter but it still seems like summer. There are reports that this is the year of the longest summer on record. We are near the end of October and the sun is still shining, the flowers are blooming and the grass still needs cutting. It has made the seasonal clearing, digging and tidying very pleasant and there is no better place in Berkhamsted than on a plot on Sunnyside on a warm autumn day.

As we are coming to the end of the gardening season we can look back on a successful year. We have no vacant plots on either Sunnyside Old or New. The interest in taking up allotments has increased enormously and the popularity of organic gardening and fresh vegetables is good to see. But the success of Sunnyside does not come out of thin air. It takes hard work and time given on someone's part. And that someone has been our Chairman, for the past three years, Bruce Jones. But now Bruce is leaving Berkhamsted and will therefore be retiring from the office of Chairman. We owe him a very large debt of gratitude for the enthusiasm and dedication he has shown in his efforts to persuade the Council to adopt his allotment strategy so that our allotments would be safe for the future. He has also spent a lot of time showing plots to would be new tenants and convincing them of the delights of Sunnyside. Bruce will be very much missed. We send our best wishes to him and Liz for their new life in the north close to their family.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 25th November at 10.30am

The annual general meeting of Sunnyside Allotment Society will take place on Saturday, 25th November at 10.30 am at the Training Centre of Sunnyside Rural Trust, Ivy House Lane. We hope as many members as possible will attend as we have the very important task of electing a new Chairman and Site Representative on the Town Council's Allotment Management Team.

If you feel that you could take up both, or either one, of these positions which are very important to the continued success of our society, or if you know of any member whom you feel might be persuaded, please inform the Chairman, Bruce Jones or Jenny Sippings, the Secretary. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary by 13th November and elections for these and other committee members will take place at the meeting.

Will you please take note that the election of site representative on the Allotment Team will take place at this AGM and the form sent out by the Council with the annual invoice should be ignored.

The agenda is attached to this newsletter, but please raise any other subject you wish to discuss under any other business.

You will be able to pay your annual £2.00 subscription to SAS which provides you with the opportunity to participate in the annual seed order. This is run annually, for our benefit, by our hard working secretary and is a money saving venture.

Allotment Working Parties

You will see that we have changed the name from clearance days to working parties! There is still a need for effort on communal projects to improve the sites of Sunnyside Old and New, but there are no longer unlet plots waiting to be cleared. This is a very positive position to be in but we still need help. So if you are free, on any or all of the following Saturdays over the winter, please come along. You will be sustained with hot soup and light bites and it is a good day of communal exercise!

The dates are Saturdays, 4th November, 6th January, 3rd February and 6th March.

Ways to consider your neighbours

On our plots there are two main ways of showing community spirit.

1. Make sure your plot is cultivated and kept tidy and free from weeds, as far as possible. If it looks unkempt, over a period of time, you are in danger of being asked to give it up, especially as at present the demand exceeds the supply.
2. If you feel you must have a bonfire, follow the rules given out by the Council and check the wind direction so that neighbouring gardeners are not upset by the smoke.

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).

Other activities

Angela has been busy keeping our allotments in the public eye. On October 1st, she organised a stall at the Ashridge Visitors Centre in a *Pot to Plate Day* which highlighted local produce. In spite of rain and wind it was well attended and we were able to make contact with several other local allotment societies. Our produce was advertised by an overflowing basket of attractive vegetables and fruit which was the first prize for the raffle on our stall. Sunnyside was also represented at the Lion's Community Fair, held on 14th October.

On Sunday, 15th October, all tenants on Sunnyside New were invited to meet for a welcome drink on Plot 70. This was the first time that there has been a social event on Sunnyside New but there are now so many new tenants it was felt by the Committee that there should be an opportunity for them to meet.

Several people came and enjoyed a drink in the warm October sunshine. Soup and rolls were also on offer, and it goes without saying that the soup was homemade from allotment produce! Thank you to Angela, Jenny and Barbara for organising this. It is hoped soon to have a tea hut built for the benefit of tenants on 'New' so that they can also have the pleasure of a rest and a chat over a cup of tea or coffee.

Bird boxes

The bird boxes in Birtchnell's Copse were inspected in September. They were clearly numbered and cleared of any debris. It looked as if two out of the six had been used this season and one had definitely been inhabited by a glis glis! This unwelcome visitor had been sent on its way and it is hoped that the blue tits and other birds will occupy more of them next year. It is planned that two more boxes will be built before next February.



Above: Tenants on Sunnyside New enjoying the autumn sunshine whilst getting to know each other.

Some Gardener's Tips

For the new gardeners among us, the seeds to plant now are sweet peas, broad beans and garlic.

- Attractive colourful climbing French beans are Corona D'ora (yellow) and Cosse, Violette (purple).
- You could plant a blue potato, Blue Congo
- Strawberries could be planted on a strawberry table.

Allotment Society Calendar

The finishing touches are being added to this year's calendar. The theme for the calendar this year is different crops – varieties that grow well on Sunnyside, growing tips and use in the kitchen.

They will be on sale at the AGM and also at the Christmas Drinks, priced at £5.00. They can also be obtained from Jenny Sippings (865890).

The calendars make great Christmas gifts and have been very popular over the last few years – so don't leave it too late!

Christmas drinks

The annual Christmas drinks get together will take place on Sunday 17th December from 12.00 to 3.00 ish at the tea hut (B15). There will be mulled wine and mince pies. Please bring a contribution and dress warmly!

Tenancy Changes

IN

Adrian Basnett	N70
Hayley Batchelor	N27
Charles Bristow	N11
Neil Churchyard	C3
John Eaton	A3B
Victoria Fox	N26
Nigel Harris	N68
Andy James	N57A
Philippa Jones	A38B
Paul Lee	N69
Elisabeth Karin Newman	A44
Auomira Parks	N57
Ray H Phipps	A32A
Errol Reilly	N65
Chantal Ricketts	N10
Andrew Walker	N2
Scott Wegener	N61
Phillip Woulds	A32B

OUT

Tom Bath	C3
Barry Gavan	N62
Ruth Holland Elliott	N64, N65
Rob Hughes	A4A
Chris & Mrs Lisa Jones	N39
Vicky Kidney	A32
Angus Laing	N41
Melissa Murray-Jones	A44A
Peggy Picco	B11A
Peter & Judith Ward	A44B
Tessa Willy & Terry Patterson	N11

A Project in pictures...



The new Summerhouse (next to the Tea Hut) took shape over the Summer. Again, it was a great team effort – not just with the hands on building, but also with the refreshments! It gives us a great place to shelter in the winter, whilst enjoying a well earned cuppa. Thanks to everyone that helped out.

The Plot Thickens!... Again! **by John Driver**

Some of you may have read John's article in the last issue and been a little confused with the last few paragraphs. A technical 'glitch' with the production emails resulted in the fractions being missed off, which made for several inaccuracies. Apologies for that John!

The correct version with fractions follows – it should make perfect sense now...

Now, I hear you say, what has all this to do with your Allotment? In it's simplest form, here's how all of this links to the size of your plot at Sunnyside which will be either 5 'Poles' or 10 'Poles' in size:-

As explained, a 'Rod', 'Perch' or 'Pole' equals $5\frac{1}{2}$ Yards in length = $\frac{1}{4}$ of a 'Chain'.

A 'Square Pole' = $5\frac{1}{2}$ yards x $5\frac{1}{2}$ yards = $30\frac{1}{4}$ Square Yards.

This was the amount of land that could be dug by a 'fit peasant' with a mediaeval wooden spade in just one day (not bad going 'eh considering the mainstay of their diet was Bread and Beer!).

A typical 10 Pole Allotment –

Was 10 poles x $30\frac{1}{4}$ Square Yards = $302\frac{1}{2}$ Square Yards = 10 days digging!

Number of 'Poles' per 'Acre' –

Is therefore 4840 Sq. yds divided by $30\frac{1}{4}$ Sq.Yds = 160 Poles per acre.

Number of 10 Pole Allotments per Acre. –

Therefore, the number of 10 Pole allotments in one Acre = 16 (ie.160 divided by 10).

Finally, how big an area is Sunnyside Allotments?

As far as I can ascertain, on SS Old plus SS New there are 235 Plots of 10 Poles = 2,350 Poles.

If you then take your trusty calculator and divide 2,350 by 160 poles per Acre you should find that Sunnyside allotment land area is approximately $14\frac{3}{4}$ acres. So there you have it!

My thanks go to 'Old Pete's Ramblings' from the NASLC News which provided the historical context for this article.

SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

AGENDA FOR THE TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY 25TH NOVEMBER, 2006 AT THE SUNNYSIDE RURAL TRUST, IVY HOUSE LANE, BERKHAMSTED AT 10.30 A.M.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approve the minutes of the last AGM
3. Chairman's report
4. Consider and approve the Society's accounts
5. Future of Open Days
6. Future events
7. Future projects
8. To receive any nominations for officers/committee members
9. Election of officers and committee:
 - Chairman
 - Vice Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Committee members
10. Election of Allotments' representative on Town Council's Allotments Management Team
11. Any other business

There will be an opportunity to pay Society subs for 2005/2006 at the AGM but if you are unable to attend the AGM then subs can be sent with this slip to John Powell or put into the post box on the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to SAS please).

Name

Address

Plot Number Telephone

Amount enclosed cash/cheque (please circle)