



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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

4/2008

Autumn; time for falling leaves, dying flowers, shortening days, frost in the air, Hallowe'en and fireworks and this year's surprise, snow before October is out! It's the end of the year and perhaps the enthusiasm for gardening is decreasing as the last of this season's produce is harvested.

But the theme of this autumn's newsletter is forward planning for the new season and sharing work for the good of the society. Seeds for next year may have been ordered and individual plans for crops may well have been made. The society is busy with rabbit proofing and water conservation and plans for essential maintenance. But this needs manpower and there is a desperate need for new volunteers to help and join the decreasing band of those who have done this work for many years. We all take for granted that such maintenance and improvements will be done and we all gain so much by the high standard of upkeep which exists at Sunnyside. A few hours of active help on working party days would guarantee that this can continue. It may not, if there is no increased support. So please be aware of this plea, give us your help and make sure that these important dates, listed below, get into your diary. Many hands will make light work!

Our Chairman, Freda Earl, writes her thoughts for this newsletter and reflects our theme.

Not much left now of the summer crops and the winter leeks and brassicas are on their way.

Time to pay the rent, mend the roof on the shed and think about next year. It is autumn when gardeners make their new year resolutions and they seem to last longer than the January ones.

Mine are mainly about over optimism. When I plant the onion sets there always seems to be plenty of room in the bed for a few radishes alongside and some carrots and maybe beetroot. Wrong. By the time Summer comes the onions are fighting for space and the carrots are what I like to call new – which is a euphemism for undersized. The beetroot and the spinach beet which invites itself are as happy as Larry so this years resolution is crowd the things which don't mind ,give the onions a clear run. And do something about growing better carrots

As I write this, Three Valleys should have connected the new water supply at Sunnyside New. The SAS were asked to prepare for the connection by digging a hole for Three Valley s to connect and to install a meter outside the allotments. TVs gave the Town Council a date and it was made clear that if everything was not ready they would not only go back where they came from but they would charge for the visit. Well we were ready on the due date. Where were they?

Tenants alongside the railway on Old have been making space for the rabbit fence to be dug in. This should stop the rabbit stock being replenished from the railway. Sunnyside new will come later.

One or two tenants did not clear their stuff from the fence as they agreed. There was some talk about them finding their sheds on the wrong side of the rabbit fence but in the end other tenants helped them. If you are one of these perhaps you would like to take the helpers out to a drink or something to show your appreciation.

Talking of helping, one of the items on the agenda at the AGM will be a discussion about how best to share the load. When people are always willing to help it is all too easy to let them do it all and get overburdened. It is not always obvious to other people when this is happening and so offers of help are not made. Sunnyside is much better than the other two sites because of the way tenants help with the day to day running like monitoring the water supply as well as the superhuman efforts like last years pipe laying. Because we do this we save money for the council (and ourselves as ratepayers) and are in a strong position to get improvements from them and to negotiate with outside bodies ourselves.

There is no doubt that we need more people to join in. Please think about it before the AGM on November 29th and if you can't come, please send any comments you have to me at the Tea hut or by e-mail at mrsfredaearl@talktalk.net

Annual General Meeting - 29.11.08

This will take place as usual at Sunnyside Rural Trust, on Saturday, 29th November at 10.30 am. There will be the usual election of officers and as always more volunteers are needed to fill vacant posts. Sadly, this year Ted Dyer is standing down from the committee and as deputy site representative. Ted has been the mainstay of the committee for many years and his advice and help will be sorely missed but we hope someone will come forward to step into his shoes.

John Powell, the treasurer will be present to collect annual subscriptions (£2.50) and one of the great advantages of belonging to Sunnyside Allotment Society is being able to enjoy the benefits of the low prices offered in the Seed Scheme.

Jenny Sippings, the secretary, would like to receive any nominations for the committee, before the meeting, if possible. If you have any thoughts which you wish to air, please come along to this meeting.

Allotment Charges and Tidy Gardens

We have all received our tenancy charges from the Council by now and it is advisable to pay them as soon as possible. You will note that there have been inflationary increases to £2 per pole and £1.50 for water.

We are all aware that we are committed, as part of our agreement, to keep our gardens tidy. If any plot holder is finding it difficult to cope with their present size and would like to reduce their holding, please inform Freda Earl or John Driver as there is a considerable demand for half or quarter plots.

We are also appealing for anyone who is prepared to rotivate. This could help eliminate unruly weeds. You could use Mypex, an impermeable membrane, as an alternative. Contact Freda at the Tea Hut for help with either of these projects.

Working Party Dates for your Diary

SUNDAY 7th DECEMBER

(Birtchnells Copse)

SUNDAY 11th JANUARY

SUNDAY 1st FEBRUARY

SUNDAY 1st MARCH

Bring your gloves and join in the fun! Light lunch provided for the hungry volunteers.

Getting to Grips with your Ground

Most tenants have this problem at some time, either when taking over a plot or when circumstances have unfortunately led to some neglect.

Should we follow the Bob Flowerdew method and make raised beds, or we should we dig or rotivate? There is plenty of advice available. The Welcome Pack is obtainable from the Council. Clive Smith's excellent article Breaking New Ground comes with our Tenancy Agreements and is worth reading from beginning to end.

There are further practical suggestions on our excellent website; www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk It is well worth a visit when it is too wet to garden!

Two of our new allotment holders, Rachel Lyon, and Rebecca

Gee who have plots on Sunnyside New, have written about their experiences as novice gardeners which others might find very helpful.

Rachel writes, "My plot was 'rough' when I took it over but has a quantity of raised beds and two apple trees. We have had a very wet year and so have had a surplus of courgettes, onions and rocket, and I have had my first successes with carrots, beetroot and garlic. Sadly my sweet corn was anaemic and a lot of my potatoes got blight. I am often up on my allotment pottering, when I am not at work, and gardening with my two boys at weekends."

Rebecca writes, "I am Rebecca Gee, and I have an allotment on Sunnyside New, plot 63, which I share with my husband Geof and two children, Daisy and Charlie. Geoff does the digging, I do the planting and the children do the moaning and eating, and torturing worms.

We chose to plant our allotment in raised beds and it's worked out well for us. The first thing I planted just over three years ago were 50 strawberry plants, one really cold December afternoon. I was a bit overkeen and bought all the plants on the internet. Every June since, we've had literally bucketfuls of strawberries and they alone have saved us the cost of the allotment rental. They take very little work but it's huge reward as the kids love them so much.

Our most successful vegetable by far has been onions. I plant about 200 sets of red and yellow onions every April (and the sets are so cheap to buy) and come August we string the big fat onions up and have enough to last us pretty much the whole year until the next ones are ready!

Apart from the first year, when we had too many to eat, we've had no luck at all with carrots. I have no idea why. We've tried planting different types, at different depths and at varying times of the year but with no success. Rachel was kind enough to share some of hers with us this year and I was extremely jealous!

Other things we've done well with are butternut squash, broccoli,

cauliflower, beetroot, peas, all sorts of beans, and rocket. But we've just lost all our sweetcorn to rats for the second year in a row which I'm gutted about. We learn something new every year and will make sure we net them next year!

We've just had our third year of produce and love how much money we're saving by growing our own! "

Thank you both for your amusing and interesting comments and sharing your personal successes and failures with us. We would be grateful to receive, and happy to publish any other contributions.

Christmas drinks

Everyone is invited to our annual Christmas Drinks party on Sunday, 21st December at the tea hut on Sunnyside Old from midday onwards. We hope that the sun will be shining as it usually is.

Please bring your own refreshments but there will be plenty of mulled wine to celebrate the festive season.

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

Mr Lewis Eckett	C27A
Ms Kelly Walsh	N7B
Mr Brandon Bellamy	A30A
Ms Lisa Rigby	N5A

Newsletter articles

We are always on the lookout for interesting articles for the newsletter. If you would like to contribute please contact Brenda Baynes our Editor on 01442 865853 or email her at brenda.baynes@btinternet.com.

Water issues...

The committee would like to remind tenants that ONLY siphoning water from the main tanks into tanks or butts on individual plots is permitted. Those tenants with tank tap keys are also only allowed to fill tanks or butts on their plots.

Another productive year at Sunnyside...



November 07 - Work on the new water infrastructure



March 08 - Road repairs working party



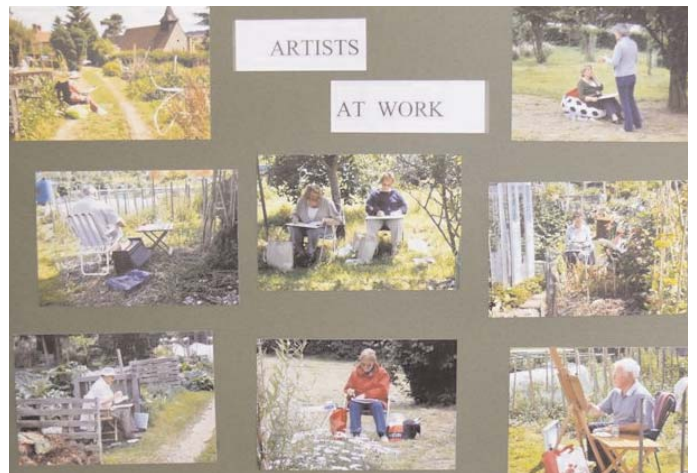
April 08 - Unexpected snow caught us all out.



May 08 - Blue Tit in her nesting box in Birtchnells Copse



August 08 - Produce galore



August 08 - Our beautiful surroundings provided inspiration for local artists.

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).

SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

AGENDA FOR THE TWELFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER, 2008 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. Improvement of facilities on Sunnyside New
6. Vermin
7. To receive any nominations for officers/committee members
 - Election of officers and committee:
 - Chairman
 - Vice Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Committee members
8. Election of Allotments' representative on Town Council's Allotments Management Team
9. Future developments
10. Any other business

Please send in any nominations for officers, the committee and allotments site rep to Jenny Sippings, 82 George Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 2EQ or email to jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com.
Please make sure your nominee is willing to stand.

There will be an opportunity to pay Society subs (£2.50) for 2008/2009 at the AGM but if you are unable to attend the AGM then subs can be sent with this slip to John Powell (20 Castle Hill Avenue) or put into the post box on the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to SAS please).

Name:

Address:

Plot Number: Telephone:

Email:

Amount enclosed: cash/cheque (please circle)