



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Note

Thank you to those of you who have provided me with a nice selection of articles and photos for this issue. Now that the newsletter is distributed electronically only, there is no longer a need to keep it to 4 pages, as was the case when we had it printed. This means that I don't have to worry about having too much material, so I hope this encourages you to put together something on a subject that perhaps you have been thinking about. Send it at any time, as I can always keep it for the next issue.

You might like to know that my part in the production of each issue is to gather all the articles, edit as necessary, get them professionally proof-read (by my partner, Paul) and then send it all off with a set of photos to Jenny, who has the desktop publishing software and skills required for the next stage. She puts all the material I send her into the final format that you receive, and a great job she does too.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy reading this issue,

Lin Phillips

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

Chairman's Notes

I really hope we are emerging from the worst of Covid into some kind of 'armed truce'; so let's keep up the jobs and behave sensibly.

This year my harvest has been very mixed; plenty of pumpkins but not a single courgette (slugs, I think). I hope you had better luck.

The tea hut on SSO B-road has seen plenty of service over the years but is now in the process of being replaced. Volunteers at the recent, first of the season, working party made a good start at clearing the area. The next steps will be to level the ground and to erect a replacement shelter.

Through the winter there will be more working party sessions, to carry out clearance and maintenance jobs. They are usually the second Sunday of the month. The jobs have been agreed by the committee and coordinated by John Goffey.

As winter approaches please remember not to drive on the allotment paths and only park on them, briefly, for collections and deliveries.

We expect to have an 'in person' Society AGM on Saturday 22nd January 2022. The arrangements are to be confirmed.

Good gardening, stay well.

John Eaton



Photos—Jeanne Woodcraft



Seed Orders

If you want to place a seed order this year, please remember to return your order form, with payment, to me by 31st October (all details are on the letter that accompanied your seed catalogue). This will enable me to check and collate all orders and send them to Kings in time for the Society to receive its early order discount. Seeds and sundries are usually delivered in December, with seed potatoes arriving in January (I will inform you of their arrival) – fruit, plants and mushrooms are delivered directly to you at the appropriate time. There were delays to these timings last year, but hopefully this year will see a return to the earlier ‘normality’!
.. and let’s hope for a good growing season next year!

Andy James

Tenants’ Picnic in August

As we were unable again this year to hold an Open Day, it was decided to have a picnic for tenants and their friends and families. It was a way for tenants new and old to come together and get to know each other.

During the various lockdowns, a walk across the allotments was a popular route. People saw us getting our fresh air, exercise, and company (at a distance), as well, of course, as our fresh fruit and veg. So, although the waiting list for plots had been cleared just before Covid hit, it soon began to fill up again. The picnic provided a nice opportunity to welcome new tenants.

Everyone brought their own refreshments, as we were not ready to open the tea hut at that point. We were lucky with the weather - not so hot that we needed to bother with gazebos and parasols, but warm enough to relax on the grass, and the event was enjoyed by more than 70 people.

A successful day. Perhaps we should do it again?

Kate Rankin, A9



Sunset over Sunnyside—Debbie Crooks



Picnic photos—Clive Smith



Christmas Drinks event – Sunday 19th December, 12.30-2.30pm (provisional)

All being well, we will once again have a chance to meet for a festive drink and share some food on the above date. Confirmation and details will follow closer to the time.



Penny's field of thistles



Penny's allotment October 2021



More picnic photos—Clive Smith



A Year on my Allotment

Well, it's been my first full year on A37 - and what a difference. I started with an enormous crop of thistles in 2020, and am finishing 2021 with very respectable crops of actual fruit and veg. Some things did better than others, of course, and I've learned a lot. In particular, thirty seed potatoes are about twenty too many, two courgette plants produce an astonishing number of courgettes, and badgers managed to break into Fort Sweetcorn despite my best efforts!

I love my allotment, and my aim is to make it as wildlife-friendly as possible with plenty of bee- and butterfly-friendly flowers. Ladybird larvae were especially helpful in eating up the aphids in Spring – so much so that my daughter took some home to put on her broad beans! I spent much time deciding how to lay it out and building the framework (the coppiced hazel from Sunnyside Rural Trust was a bonus, and so much nicer than using the usual bamboo canes – just hoping that it's not taken root!). Grass paths divide the space (thank you to Adrian for suggesting I use seed rather than turf, as it's been very successful indeed) and I've planted plum, cherry and apple trees, raspberry canes and currant bushes. The blackberry (kept because it was too difficult to remove) has proved to be a viciously thorny thug, produces nothing more than one could find in any hedge, and is now looking forward to a very short lifespan. While there's nothing in the rules that actually prohibits the use of dynamite, I'm guessing I may just have to make the effort to dig it out!

So what was successful? Flowers – all of them. I have a good crop from the squash that I put in to ramble under the new raspberry canes, partly because I love growing squash and partly to shade the ground. New dahlia tubers have provided more flowers than I know what to do with, and the assorted climbing beans produced huge quantities. Early in the season, my new greenhouse produced excellent crops of French beans, followed by tomatoes, chillies and peppers. Once cleared, I'll try some winter salads to make best use of the space.

And I've met so many people – some with allotments, some walking along the footpath, and those who live in the flats. Having moved here in February 2020, I know I'd never had met and chatted to so many people if I'd just had a big garden instead.

All in all, it's been a great year, and I'm looking forward to next season when (obviously!) everything will be perfect

Penny MacGregor, A37

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

Hannah Grace	B0
Tom Vila	N64A
Les Bushell	N67

Goodbye to:

Susan and Dave Howes	A15
Dave Rance	A19
Jenny and Richard Hackworth	A25A
Philippa Jones	A28
Caroline Weston	B11C
Bob Isherwood	B22A
Maria Horn	N13
Barry Pattenden	N46
Joanne Berry	N58
James Burke	N64A
Henrietta Bors	N70

Responsible Bonfires

It's the time of year when we are clearing our plots, and perhaps thinking of building a bonfire. But please remember, before you start, that bonfires are potentially polluting, irritating to neighbours, and harmful to people with respiratory conditions. If possible, don't start one at all.

Instead, do recycle anything that can be re-used. Wood, plastic and metal are all accepted at our local recycling centre (non-biodegradable items should not be brought onto the allotments in the first place). Biodegradable material should be composted on your allotment if at all possible.

But if you do decide to go ahead with a bonfire, please note the following Council advice:

- Only burn dry material to minimise smoke.
- Never burn household rubbish, rubber tyres, or anything containing plastic, foam or paint - these all produce highly poisonous compounds.
- Never use old engine oil, methylated spirits or petrol to light the fire or encourage it to burn.
- Avoid lighting a fire in unsuitable weather conditions - smoke hangs in the air on damp days, still days and in the evening. If it is windy, smoke may be blown into neighbours' gardens and across roads.
- Also, at Sunnyside it is best to avoid burning at weekends and Bank Holidays when other people want to enjoy their plots, and our neighbours their gardens.
- Avoid burning when air pollution in your area is high.
- And finally, never leave a fire unattended or leave it to smoulder - douse it with water before you go home.

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@

Manure Supplies

Here is a short list of local suppliers, though I have to admit I have not rung them to see if they are still in business this year:

Dave Burgin	01442 832997
Phil Marks	01442 823357
Nigel Durrant	01442 403351

(If anyone knows of another reliable supplier, please let me know so I can insert their details in a future issue. - Lin Phillips, Editor)



Jean Barnett

You may have already heard that very sadly, Jean died in August at the grand age of 89. She had been the tenant of A40 for over 20 years when she finally gave up her allotment in 2016. In her working life she was a dedicated nurse and started working for the NHS in 1950. Jean may have been a familiar figure to many of you walking through Sunnyside Old as she lived very close by at the Cedars. Her son Mark helped Jean on her allotment and is now a tenant on SSN.



Jean working on her allotment in 2001—Clive Smith

Swing Gate School visit to the allotments

It was lovely to be able to show children around the allotments again. On 7th October we gave the Year 2 children from Swing Gate a guided tour of some of the allotments on Sunnyside Old. The children were learning about the lifecycle of plants and we were able to show the children a variety of vegetables and flowers growing on the allotments. They also saw the lovely art work on B35 done by the tenant's daughter Emily. We dug up potatoes from the ground to show the children how potatoes are grown. The children were very enthusiastic and well behaved and were heard making comments like "I would love to have an allotment" and "I have so many questions I want to ask". Each class took a bag of vegetables and herbs back to school for 'The Big Soup Share' soup making the next day.

Helping Hedgehogs

Hedgehog numbers have declined rapidly due to loss and fragmentation of habitat. Pockets of land are good for hedgehogs, but if they don't join up with other pockets the population won't be sustainable. A hedgehog can travel up to a mile in a night. If a CD sized hole can be cut into garden fences, it means that hedgehog-friendly gardens are joined up. Ask your neighbours if they will do the same.

Keep a corner of your allotment or garden wild, and build a log pile to offer shelter, protection and natural food. Avoid pesticides and slug pellets, as they can harm hedgehogs and damage their food chain.

Before mowing, strimming or scything, check areas for hedgehogs. Keep pea netting about 22-30cm (9-12") off the ground so hedgehogs can pass underneath. Compost heaps provide food for birds, toads and hedgehogs. Be-

fore using compost, always check the base and sides gently for sleeping wildlife.

Bonfire heaps offer a tempting home for a hedgehog. Just before the fire is lit, relocate materials by hand - no sharp implements, please - to ensure there are no resident hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs are good swimmers, but can become trapped in ponds, pools or gullies with steep, slippery sides. Ensure there is a gently sloping edge or rocks as an escape.

Litter causes injuries to hedgehogs every year. They get stuck in empty food cans, yoghurt pots and plastic mugs, and starve to death. The plastic rings that hold cans together should always have each circle cut. Even if it isn't your litter, please pick it up and dispose of it responsibly. It helps our wildlife.

During long dry spells, it is helpful to leave bowls of water and meat-based food for hedgehogs. Leaving food for birds and / or hedgehogs can also attract rats, which is a problem, particularly close to the canal. However, at the allotments, there are some vigilant feline visitors who offer free and very effective rodent patrol and control services.

For more information, go to the British Hedgehog Preservation Society at www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk

Deirdre Ahern, B11A



Rainbow photo from Sunnyside Facebook page



Double rainbow—Clive Michel



Chris Locke—photo Simon Nicolle



Fiesta apple tree—Clive Smith