

# Hotwells and District Allotments Association (HwDAA)

## NEWSLETTER

HwDAA website [www.hwdaa.co.uk](http://www.hwdaa.co.uk)

### Issue 3 Winter 2014



#### WELCOME TO YOUR NEWSLETTER!

..In this edition:

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#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

What a wonderful summer, followed by a record-breaking September! I hope you were rewarded with a bumper harvest. As well as the great weather, it has been a good year for our Allotment Association: the final phase of a new water supply and tanks installed at Alderman Moore's; new gates and locks to improve access and security were fitted at Meadows, Bower Ashton and Kennel Lodge 1; and urgent repairs to the boundary walls of the Kennel Lodge sites. The profits from sales at our Stores have increased on the previous year, thanks to the hard work of Steve Fay, Lesley Woodward and all the Volunteers. In spite of this, we had no choice but to increase plot rents – the first time for five years, but our charges are still well below that of comparable Bristol City Council plots and represent excellent value.

#### Awards

I am delighted to report that HwDAA swept the board in this year's Council allotment awards! Congratulations to all the following tenants: *Best Kept Allotment*: 1<sup>st</sup> Charles Glass (WC52); 2<sup>nd</sup> Kean Lamb (WC51b); 3<sup>rd</sup> Heather Jenne (MD5). *Best Newcomer Tenant*: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wendy Miller (WC63b); 3<sup>rd</sup> Jane Barber (WC51a).

#### Stores Volunteers

Many thanks to Amy Gorrigan who is stepping down as a Stores Volunteer. Amy is one of the longest-serving helpers and we are very grateful for all her help and support over the years.

#### Water usage

Having lots of lovely water tanks on all six of our sites, combined with many weeks of warm sun and no rain, has resulted in hefty water bills. If you do not have guttering and a water butt on your shed, please consider fitting this as a winter project. Your Site Rep will offer advice and we have a limited supply of large plastic drums which make great butts and will save you money.

#### Bower Ashton Stores

After many years of running a small scale stores in the old stables building at Bower Ashton, we were recently informed by the Council (who own the building) that we had to



leave. The building is in very poor state; there are plans to develop this whole site – part of a major scheme to restore Ashton Court Mansion; and it turned out that we never had a lease to use the building. We considered operating the Bower Ashton stores from a container on one of our sites there, but running stores in two locations has proved tricky for various reasons and after weighing up the pros and cons, we decided to call it a day. Please continue to support our main shop at Alderman Moore's which stocks a basic range of items at very reasonable prices.

### **Talks and events**

I am pleased to let you know that Jenny Jones (plot 36a AM) has kindly offered to take on the role of Events Co-ordinator and is in the process of arranging a few 'happenings' over the coming months. Please see Jenny's article (below).

### **Accidents**

Please take care when working on your allotment. Thankfully we have few reported accidents and these tend to be minor injuries, but this is a reminder that should you sustain an injury, please be sure to complete a simple accident report form which can either be downloaded via our website (address above) or obtained from your Site Rep.

### **Bonfires and incinerators**

These are now permitted until 31 March, but if you really must light a fire, please observe a few common sense rules: choose a day when few people are around; try not to create too much smoke (no green/wet materials); do not leave a fire burning unattended – which includes when you go home. If you are troubled by someone's bonfire, by all means explain the problem them, but politely please. Please report any major problems to your Site Rep.

### **Committee meetings: a summary of the main items we have recently dealt with**

- Site-specific issues via reports from the Site Reps
- Financial updates from the Treasurer
- Reports from the Stores Support Group
- Bower Ashton Residents' Parking Scheme and its impact on our tenants
- Approval of 'structures' (greenhouses, sheds, poly tunnels, large fruit cages)
- Plot inspections
- Capital works programme for 2015
- Accident reports (1 received)

*Our Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month. If you have any important matters for possible consideration by the Committee, please contact me.*

Finally - **an important reminder** that our **AGM** is on **Thursday 15 January 2015, 7:30pm at the Alderman Moore's Shop**. This is your chance to meet the members of the HwDAA committee and hear what we do on your behalf, so please try to come as your views are very important to us.

Season's greetings and best wishes for the coming year.

**John Holland, Chair: plot 53 White City - email: [chair.hwdaa@outlook.com](mailto:chair.hwdaa@outlook.com)**

### **EDITOR'S PICKS AND SEASONAL ADVICE**

Welcome to all new allotment holders!

I hope you really enjoy your plot and take advantage of all the information and advice to be found from your fellow allotment holders, in the Shop at Alderman Moore's allotment site, on the HwDAA website and in this newsletter.

I only have a couple of years experience under my belt so I'm still a newbie but I have learnt to sow and sow again – and just to keep trying until something pops up. Also I talked a lot to other people on my site to find out what grows well, when to plant and how. They were all really helpful even when I asked stupid questions! Most of all I have developed loads and loads of patience.... So good luck and have fun!

### Top tip

Craig Dunsford, plot 52, KL1 grows corn in his compost bin to stop badgers from bundling the stalks over. He then plants field beans and crimson clover in the compost to increase the nitrogen in the compost for the next growing season. Thanks for this tip, Craig.

### FOCUS ON OUR ALLOTMENT SITES – Bower Ashton



**Roy Davis site rep and Harry Green's original shed**

Bower Ashton is situated off the Cumberland basin and has 36 plots. The site has a locally famous allotment holder - Harry Green, who was a tenant at Bower Ashton until two years ago, cultivating plots 32 and 33 for 67 years! Just think how many cabbages he grew in that time! He reached the grand age of 101 on 27<sup>th</sup> September this year. Every year the Harry Green Shield is given for the best kept HwDAA allotment and this year is awarded to Charles Glass (White City plot 52) – congratulations!

As well as being the site rep, Roy Davis grows lovely brassicas on his plot and also cultivates tomatoes, chilli peppers and even melons in his greenhouse (editor's note – believe me I've seen them and Roy's enthusiasm is so catching that maybe I'll try that next year!). He also has a wild flower area and grows a whole range of other fruit and veg.

Ron Pedley assists Roy with the Bower Ashton site when needed and many of us have appreciated Ron's extensive and valuable knowledge over the years. Here is Ron on his plot at Bower Ashton:



Ron planted biennial red elephant carrot heritage seed last year and he will be harvesting the **red** carrots this year. Apparently carrots have not always been orange! Ron has had a real problem this year with badgers making four large holes in the side of his poly tunnel – if anyone else has had this problem please contact the newsletter editor (see below).

## **LATEST NEWS FROM OUR SHOP: SEEDS UPDATE (contributed by Lesley Woodward, Seeds Manager)**

Some visitors to the Shop have commented on the bareness of the seed racks. This should have changed by now as our order of **2171** packets of Kings Seeds has arrived. The first seeds to be put out on the racks will be the Sweet Peas, with 25 varieties for sale, followed by those we need to start off in the first months of the new year.

Copies of the new Kings catalogue are available in the Shop. It is very difficult to resist the mouth-watering descriptions of varieties, but one I did reject was *Taraxacum officinale*, 'probably the most nutritious green there is'. But 70 pence for a packet of Dandelion Seeds? Perhaps not! On the other hand I have ordered a few packets of Quinoa for the adventurous among us. And I could not resist 'Pink Banana Squash'! Due to falling demand, we no longer stock a wide range of garden flowers, but I have made sure we have a variety of 'Good Companions' such as Sweet Peas; French Marigolds; Poached Egg plant; Herbs and Phacelia and, of course, Sunflowers, purely and simply for FUN.

How did I choose what to buy? The first, and essential step, was the compilation of the 'Wondrous Master Spreadsheet'. This now holds (for each variety) the figures for the stock checks of 2013 and 2014; how many were ordered 2013-14; how many returned out of date in 2014. With this data I can calculate how many were sold in the 2013/14 year.

Knowing what we sold I can then, in no particular order, take these factors into consideration:

1. Recommendations from Ron Pedley's encyclopaedic knowledge of vegetables and **YOUR comments left in the Shop**; TV programmes ; Vegetable growing text books etc
2. Has it got an AGM (Award of Garden Merit from the RHS)?
3. Disease resistance e.g. Club Root resistance in Brussels Sprouts
4. Any other outstanding quality – particularly TASTE
5. Fills an empty slot in the stock e.g. organic option

This first main order will hopefully supply all the packets of seed we need for sowing from February to April. I then expect to make several top up orders. It is very useful if you tell me that we have sold out of something – **please leave a comment in the note book** on the counter in the Shop. I can then buy more when I make a top up order. But as the year goes on I will be wary of ordering many more seeds as I don't want to be left with too many old packets on the racks over winter. One reassurance, although you may not get the exact variety you want, there will always be seeds of that vegetable in stock. Happy growing for 2015.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS (contributed by Jenny Jones, Events Co-ordinator)**

**Two great events to cheer you through the winter:**

### **TIM FOSTER PRUNES AGAIN!**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 10.30-12.30 White City Allotments including a tea/coffee break**

**Meet at south (orchard) end of White City. Gate opens 10.15. £3 including hot drinks.**

Following a previously successful workshop for HWDAA, we have invited Tim Foster back again to give practical demonstrations of good fruit pruning practice. You are invited to join Tim for a stroll through White City Allotments, with frequent stops as he helps out with the problem children of the fruit world, views examples of good pruning (and maybe a disaster or two) and learn how to approach an intimidating subject. I worry about hacking off the wrong bit of a bush or tree that will take years to replace, or not being firm enough with the raspberry canes. We all know that we should treat summer and autumn varieties differently, but how to remember which is which? All this and more! The walk through will be followed by

hot drinks and maybe a few biscuits, if the kitty will run to it, providing an informal opportunity to quiz Tim further on the dark art of pruning. Please bring your own pruning tools, wear warm waterproof clothes, sensible footwear and bring an umbrella if there's rain in the forecast. There may be some minimal shelter for the tea break, but this is an outdoor event.

**Please note** that there is no parking provided at this location – better to park some distance away and walk or better still arrive by bike or on foot. The number 506 bus will take you to the Create Centre and White City is a short walk from there.

**PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY!! AN OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE MISSED!!:**

### **HwDAA POTATO DAY**

**When? Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015 Where? Alderman Moore's Shop What time? 10.30am to 2.00pm**

Alderman Moore's Stores will stay open longer on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015 for you to come in and buy your potatoes. We will have **27** varieties on sale, full details of potatoes on sale are on our website NOW under Shop News.

Now let me introduce myself: I am Jenny Jones your new Events Co-ordinator – I have called myself 'Co-ordinator' since it is my profound wish that most of the real work will be done by other volunteers. The first event was a great example of this – pumpkin carving kindly and efficiently organised by Cathy Harwood. It was attended and hopefully enjoyed by around 16 adults and kids. The pumpkins looked pretty spooky in the dusk.



We had someone arrive with a witch's hat, someone else came prepared with a template of the Gruffalo. Children carved all manner of faces but also ghosts, spiders, hearts, and glowing houses. We put all of the pumpkins on the counter and turned off the lights to admire them all.

### **Survey results**

To make sure that we are in tune with what you allotment holders want from the Association's Events, the Committee put out a questionnaire and got an enthusiastic response. **Detailed results are available on the website**, but in general terms here's what we found: first – there is definitely an appetite for events – out of the 124 respondents (around a quarter of you) about 100 responded positively to at least one of the suggestions and around 20 indicated that they preferred to just get on with their own plots. (And that's fine - I'm sure that most people enjoy a quiet afternoon's digging, weeding or just sitting with a cuppa enjoying the view – me too!).

Those of you who said that you would attend events showed a preference for things closely related to practical aspects of gardening (Pruning Fruit - Making Great Compost - All About Soil - Moon Planting, for example) closely followed by specialised sale days that incorporate extra information and activities, like the upcoming Potato day. Purely social activities like Pumpkin Carving or organised visits to gardens etc. were less popular, although even here more than half of the respondents answered YES or MAYBE, so it is probably worth trying one or two of these.

What came over loud and clear is that there is an enthusiasm for events – we were impressed with the speed of your responses, and several of you suggested events and places to visit – watch this space!

### **SEASONAL RECIPE IDEA (contributed by Jenny Jones, Events Co-ordinator)**

**Pumpkin soup and pumpkin pie** were served and demolished at the pumpkin carving event. Surprisingly nobody volunteered any allotment grown pumpkins and they had to be bought. Come on people: let's see the colour of your pumpkins next year! (They don't have to be huge – 30cm is quite enough for these recipes.)

**Pumpkin soup** went something like this: Bake the pumpkin in the oven until soft, scoop out the seeds and keep the good bits. (If the pumpkin is large cut it up and remove the seeds before roasting). Cook a chopped onion in olive oil until soft, add a couple of sticks of celery and maybe a carrot and some chopped ginger, garlic and chilli. Add the scooped out bits of roast pumpkin, and stock to taste (I use *Marigold* vegetable bouillon). Cook until the veg are soft and blitz in a food processor or with a hand blender. Add more liquid if necessary. You can give it a Thai twist with coconut milk, coriander & lemon grass.

**Pumpkin pie** is a bit of a challenge in this country – Americans alleged to use canned pumpkin! I used a sweet pastry with nutmeg, baked the pumpkin (as for soup), used butter, eggs and cream with a few spices in the filling. Plenty of recipes out there on the Internet!

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

President	David Thornley	0117 330 0246
Chair	John Holland	0117 987 2238
Secretary	Angie Tonge	0117 902 0948
Treasurer and Webmaster	Bob Corfield	0117 907 8420
Plots' Secretary	Peter Tucker	0771 2848 431
Newsletter Editor	Stephanie Beaven	0117 966 9748
Stores Co-ordinator	Steve Fay	0117 921 4280
Seeds Manager	Lesley Woodward	0117 926 2622
Events Co-ordinator	Jenny Jones	0117 925 3574
Maintenance Manager	Phil Cass	07811 623 136

### **SITE REPS**

Alderman Moore's	Phil Cass	07811 623 136
Bower Ashton	Roy Davis	0117 963 2102
Kennel Lodge 1	Bob Corfield	0117 907 8420
Kennel Lodge 2	Terry Hoskins	0117 923 1309
The Meadows	Lyndsay Newman	0117 966 8745
White City	John Lansdall	07855 477 369

**If you have not already done so, please let Bob Corfield have your email address as it really helps to keep our costs down. Send an email to [hwdaa@hwdaa.co.uk](mailto:hwdaa@hwdaa.co.uk) with the subject "My email address"**

**If you do not have access to email you can now view a copy of the newsletter at the Shop at Alderman Moore's.**

If you want to feedback about the newsletter or offer your contributions do please contact me at: [newsletter.hwdaa@outlook.com](mailto:newsletter.hwdaa@outlook.com) Stephanie Beaven, HwDAA Newsletter Editor, Plot 65 White City