



KENILWORTH ALLOTMENT TENANTS ASSOCIATION K.A.T.A.



NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2014

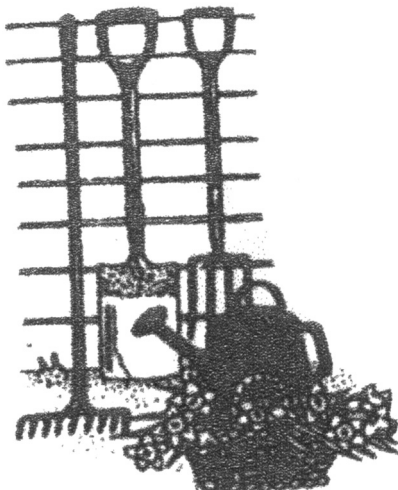
As I put pen to paper once again, the Committee are in the throes of clearing up from the aftermath of this year's annual Open Day which was held on Sunday 10th August. It was touch and go whether the event would take place at all, as at 10am on that Sunday morning, a handful of us were in the shed debating whether we should cancel the whole thing! Some of us were already soaked to the skin and after the final decision was made around mid-day to go for it, the show was set up in record time with Paula at the helm directing where gazebos and people should be placed etc. etc. The event was scaled down a little and the area of activities was consolidated around the shed area, but the most important thing was not to disappoint the public, should anyone dare to venture out into what has so far, felt like the most drenching day of the year!

This event, although 'on site' still involves an awful lot of organisational input. We rely heavily once again on the generosity of our tenants, who give not only their time both before and on the day, but who also donate their surplus crops and make wonderful cakes, jams, crumbles and chutneys for us to sell. The visiting public amazingly and thankfully are more than happy to queue up to buy our fresh and home-made produce.

Each year, we try to add to the 'interest' factor, although from the feedback we get, some of our visitors have returned to see us each year since the idea of an Open Day was first suggested way back in 2004. They visit simply to savour the general ambiance and atmosphere of a vibrant and yet relaxed and friendly Association fortunate enough to be situated in the idyllic valley known as the Odibourne Allotments. Our 'Count how many Scarecrows you can find' competition idea has always added that fun element for the children. Our total takings for that very first event were minimal compared to today's amounts,

but this first modestly successful event spurred us on to build on that experience as we had very little in the way of funds in the pot at that time. We have from day one always invited the Town's current Mayor and made a donation from our takings to his or her chosen Charity. This in turn has helped us to build good relationships with our landlords at the Town Council. With the addition of the tea tent shortly after that first event, our takings increased and the people of Kenilworth have enjoyed many a relaxing cuppa and piece of home-made cake at a fraction of the cost of any town venues. Our most daring venture so far has been a Pimm's tent, which has added just a little extra 'fun' element to the day in more ways than one. It depends on whether you have a Pimm's or two either before or after you try to negotiate the stepping stones to get to the other side of the river as to whether you finish up with wet feet and soggy sandals for the rest of the day! Needless to say the stepping stones were 'out of bounds' at this year's event! Our latest addition was to have been an ice cream cart. At the moment this is still a 'work in progress' idea, but we improvised for this year and sold ice cream from a cold box and it worked!

We are also grateful to those tenants who have generously and spontaneously set up their own side attractions. The public have been known to hurtle through our gates and race straight round to Hanif's plot to buy his delicious spicy samosas before he sells out. Chris and Nick have always brought an active demonstration beehive to the site. Unfortunately, this had to be cancelled due to the weather conditions. John and Mary (sadly retiring in September) have frequently organised 'guess the weight/length/number' type competitions and Harvey has always come up trumps with something to raise not only some cash, but a smile with his fun ideas and banter. A new contributor



Committee members

			Plot / Site
<i>Chairman</i>	Mike Hitchins	864801	79 Odibourne
<i>Secretary</i>	Lily Brownjohn	855291	51 Odibourne
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mark Cotton	07974 662750	2a Odibourne
	Robin Ashby	853560	68a Odibourne
	Chris Coton	513268	3a Spring Lane
	Paula Hallam	856480	44 Odibourne
	Dave Harwood	511220	58b Odibourne
	Peter Jones	853930	18b Odibourne
	Martyn Partridge	854890	15a Odibourne
	Catherine Pettman	748456	10 Beehive Hill
	Keith Rockett	863143	6 Beehive Hill

this year was Gill's grand-daughter Mo who also organised a fun competition from her plot, so a big thank- you also to young Imogen. Thank you also to all of the youngsters, both children and grand-children who helped us on stalls and with harvesting crops to sell at the shed. The master gardeners and composters have always added to the day for those who want some advice on the more serious aspects of gardening and composting and we did have a musical surprise in store, but unfortunately it had to be cancelled due to the uncertainty of the weather. Maybe we can persuade them to join us next year? And last but not least, well done to Paula, who in the end pulled together a really great Open Day!

Our Open Day is always planned for the last Sunday of what has been deemed 'National Allotment Week'. This is very importantly a useful vehicle to help promote Allotments nationally. The more Allotments raise their profile within the community, the less chance they have of having the land sold off for housing or other schemes.

Lily Brownjohn Allotment Secretary

WHERE HAS THIS YEAR GONE?.....

This Winter went down in history as the wettest since records began. Our Spring was the third warmest on record. The Summer so far has brought a heatwave punctuated by thunderstorms and an outbreak of potato blight! And August has brought us the tail end of a hurricane! Yet we have all soldiered on and produced some impressive crops for our 'Best Plot competition'.

INTRODUCING NEW FRIENDS / JUDGES OF OUR BEST PLOT COMPETITION

Owing to the problems that Moreton Morrell/Pershore/Mid Warwickshire colleges are having, our regular judges of many years standing could not help us this year. We were fortunate enough however to have two extremely well qualified judges who were equally as thorough and they willingly took over the reins and did a superb job for us. Because of the extremely high standard, our pre-judging threw up many more plots to be assessed than usual, which in turn meant that the judges had to return a few days later to complete the task. The results have been posted on all of our notice boards, see also page 3. Congratulations to all.

We are so grateful to Sarah Ridgeway BSc (Hons) MI Hort., from Hinton's Nurseries and her colleague, Botanist, Dr Barry Meatyard. Sarah will be offering some special discounts for our members (we will forward this information to everyone via our notice boards as soon as we have the details). Dr Barry Meatyard is also Chairman of the Guys Cliffe Walled Garden Trust. If you have read the notice boards, there is more detail about the Trust and the diversity of help needed, but briefly a group of volunteers are attempting to restore the kitchen garden at Guys Cliffe, which is thought to have been in existence since the mid 1700's, It supplied Guys Cliffe House for over 200 years. New notices will be going up shortly for new dates of volunteer work parties and it is hoped that some of us may want to get involved in the conservation and restoration work. Help with marketing, graphic design and artwork, fundraising and IT is also needed and welcomed. You can join the email list by emailing: guyscliffewalledgarden@gmail.com They can also be found on Facebook (Guys Cliffe Walled Garden).

JUDGE'S COMMENTS, AND A FEW OF OUR OWN!!!.....

1. One very important observation on the Odibourne site came from Sarah when she observed that in general the site was suffering from a lack of nitrogen. Maybe the fact that the site has been intensely cultivated for almost 100 years means that we urgently need to replenish the ground in order to improve our crops.
2. Just about everyone missed out on the fact that water conservation also includes '*mulching*'. Good points were scored for those plots with water butts, but more could have been gained if mulching had also been used. There is also still a need for more water butts in general on site, especially where there are greenhouses on plots. Collected rain water is far better for crops than mains tap water.
3. We have noticed that many of our newer tenants are using mains water from the taps. The taps are only to be used for filling up your kettles or spraying devices. Please scoop water from the troughs to fill your watering cans. Two good reasons for doing this is that the water in the troughs is warmer and so will not 'shock' your plants. It is also more naturalised and better for the crops than direct from the tap.
4. Still on the subject of water. Please remember that no watering of plots is permitted with hosepipes. Hosepipes may only be used to refill water butts.
5. Numbering of plots is sadly missing throughout and no matter how we nag everyone, it is still not happening. (easy points lost/gained)
6. Not all of us are hugely competitive and produce excellent crops regardless of any competitions. However easy marks can be lost/gained at judging time if crops are labelled. This helps the judges to award extra points for Winter crops where crop tops are similar (eg. young brassicas or young celeriac and parsnip tops).

POTATO BLIGHT.....

I could fill a page with advice, signs, conditions under which it emerges and all the do's and don'ts, but please try these websites instead: www.potato.org.uk/gardeners. OR you can get early warnings on www.blightwatch.co.uk

SO WHAT ELSE HAVE WE BEEN UP TO THIS YEAR?

For many years, we have used both the Kenilworth Festival and Lions Shows as fund raising days, but at the start of the year, we were faced with the dilemma of the Kenilworth Festival moving to September, which was no good for our sales of young plants and rhubarb etc. Paula suggested that we tried taking a stand at the Foodie Fortnight event in Talisman Square in May in place of the Festival and it paid off. It was very successful and will be repeated again next year (so long as they don't decide to move that one around)

Our next 'outing' was to the good old reliable Lions Show in the Abbey Fields in June. What a fabulous day that was. The money raised between those events will be published in our accounts at the AGM (as well as our surprising takings from the almost cancelled Open Day)!

Swiftly on the heels of the Lion's Show, our Beehive Hill site put itself firmly on the map when it opened its gates to the public in June alongside the beautiful gardens of Malthouse Lane, Fieldgate Lane and the surrounding areas as part of the National Open Gardens Scheme. The site had around 300 members of the public through its gates and all were most impressed with what they saw. People came from far and wide, not just locally. Those who were local and had just driven past on a daily basis said that they were aware that allotments existed behind the hedge, but were completely amazed at the quality of cultivation and neatness of layout and general upkeep of the site. The opening to the public of the Beehive Hill site has proved to be a good PR exercise. Credit to site reps Catherine and Keith and tenants alike for all their efforts to fly the flag on the day.

Our educational visits from local schools and nursery groups have been a regular feature on our calendar for numerous years now, and once again our many volunteers from amongst our tenants have been on hand to help us guide, advise and generally encourage these youngsters, possibly the young Allotmenters of the future. Our young visitors include Brownies, Rainbows and the University crèche group, who have regular visits to their dedicated raised beds on the educational plot. Park Hill School (year 9) descended upon us (66 in all) in June. They were studying soil composition as part of their school curriculum and we were happy to help in a practical way. In July we had 33 children from their gardening club and we were able to help in a more relaxed way, even showing them a slow worm. The nursery group from St Nicholas school also visit Odibourne on a regular basis and frequent visits are made by St Augustine's school to our Beehive Hill site. The Beehive nursery was allocated a plot right next to their school in 2008 as soon as the site was opened. *Education is high on our agenda.* Many thanks to all those volunteers who regularly help with these visits

So all in all we've had a very busy year....and it's not over yet!

STILL ON THE CALENDAR.....

There are some pretty impressive sunflowers around and we always attempt to judge these towards the end of August, so no fixed date.

RENTS:

AS THE 'ALLOTMENT YEAR' NEARS IT'S END.....

Please don't forget that September is the cut-off date for rents and the following dates are when you can pay your rent into the shed/shop. Members of Committee will be available to take your rents on:

SATURDAY 20TH & SUNDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY 27TH & SUNDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER

If you cannot make any of these dates, please advise the Secretary and alternative arrangements can be made. A fine of £5 will automatically be sent out if rents are not received on or before the 'due by' date of 29th September.

Don't forget to pick up your free King's Seed colour catalogue when you pay your rent at the shed. As members of the National Association, we have a special deal with King's seed company whereby we receive their seeds at a very competitive rate. The Association also benefits from our total sales.

AND FOR THE REST OF THE CALENDAR YEAR.....

There are some pretty competitive pumpkin growers out there and Andy from the Engine is gearing up to host the Pumpkin Weigh-in event, which this year will be held on Sunday 5th October at 11.30am. (Usual venue, pumpkins weighed outside on the pavement before adjourning inside the Engine for refreshments). Please come along even if you haven't got a pumpkin to be weighed. (Note: only pumpkins from plants purchased at the shed back in May are eligible for the competition). Andy puts on nibbles, soup and sandwiches completely free of charge and it is a most enjoyable and sociable morning/light lunch break.

AGM.....

Come along and air your views. Date Thurs 23rd October at the Royal British Legion – 7.30 prompt. Please remember that any motions for discussion must be received in writing one week prior to the meeting. Please use letter box rear of Secretary's shed, plot 51 Odibourne site.

LAST DATE FOR SEED ORDERS

Please put a note in your diary to complete your seed order by Sunday 26th Oct and return the order to Chris at 69 Spring Lane.

MAIN COMPETITION WINNERS:

		POINTS
1 st Plot 6 B/Hill	Keith & Joan Rockett	104
2 nd Plot 34 Odi	Nick & Nicky Schofield	103 ½
3 rd = Plot 72a Odi	Caroline Faulkener	101
3 rd =Plot 16 B/Hill	Madeleine Sexton	101

HIGHLY COMMENDED

1 st Plot 51 Odi	Lily Brownjohn	99
2 nd = Plot 48 Odi	Marie Gormley	95
2 nd = Plots 76a/94b Odi	Pat Hough	95
3 rd Plots 22/23 Odi	Jen Harris	94
4 th Plot 13B/Hill	Janice Othen & Di Wilson	92

NOVICES:

1 st Plot 27 B/Hill	Diane Pierce & Louise White	85
2 nd Plot 20 B/Hill	Valerie & David Hoy	83
3 rd Plot 43b Odi	Alison & Peter Selwood	79 ½

AWARD FOR SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT

There have been one or two very new tenants who have given a delightful and very stylish facelift to the odd tired plot this year, but for sheer effort and determination in rebuilding a huge fruit cage and creating a prolific and colourful meandering plot for our judges, the award goes to Nick and Nicky Schofield. Plot 34 Odibourne site.

BEST SCARECROWS 2014

JUNIORS:

		PLOT:
1 st MINECRAFT MEETS THE ALOTMENTS	Matthew & Elise Holmes	42 Odi
2 nd PETAL BELLE FAIRY	Emily & Esme White	27 B/Hill
3 rd WELSH LADY	Bethan, Emily & Lottie Jordan	37A Odi

ADULT TRADITIONAL:

1 st RE TIRED SCARECROW	Sue & Robin Ashby	68a Odi
2 nd DINGLE DANGLE SCARECROW	The Wier family	98b Odi
3 rd THE OLD TIMER	Richard Palmer	11 Odi

ADULT NOVELTY:

1 st ZomBEE meets VampIRIS	Gill & Glen Hutchinson	73 Odi
2 nd FIDLER ON THE CIDER HOUSE ROOF	Phil & Steph Alcock	28a Odi
3 rd = SUAREZ SUAREZ	John & Heather Davies	97 Odi
3 rd = MINIONS	Colin & Gail Bates	54 Odi

SECRETARY'S CHUCKLE AWARD:

DANGER MOLES AT WORK Marie Gormley 48a Odi

A record number of scarecrows appeared this year. Thank you to all who took the trouble and time to produce one. Some even appeared after the judging date to make their debut for the Open Day. All remaining scarecrows, who appeared in time for the judging on 5th August received a commendation award, and will be invited to collect them at our Presentation Evening in November. A special thanks to Maggie Hurlow, Deputy Town Clerk who performed the judging. She said that it was difficult task!

OUR SHOP CLOSURES ON SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER.....

Time to stock up on your compost if you are organised enough to sow very early seeds next Spring! Don't forget the shop starts to wind down in October and opening times are reduced to one hour only on Saturday and Sunday mornings throughout the whole month: 11-12 noon. It will not re-open until mid-February 2015.

SOME POSITIVE NEWS.....

The toilet block may be one step closer as we have now received a draft lease from Town Council to check out and agree. As Roger Bennett would have said, 'watch this space'.....

PLEASE SLOW DOWN.....

As there are now so many more young children on site these days and if you are in a vehicle or on a bicycle, please keep your speed to a minimum especially when on the Odibourne site. Young children may dart out from behind a shed and not hear you and you may not be able to stop in time.

RATS?!!!

Just a reminder to keep your rubbish to a minimum, especially that which seems to pile up behind our sheds – an ideal harbour for rats to breed. As we received a complaint recently from a resident in The Close, we would ask you all to protect our good reputation and keep areas like this spotless.

DOGS ON LEADS.....

We thank all those tenants who now observe the rules about keeping your dogs on leads when walking on site and tethered whilst not walking with them. There is still the odd tenant who does not observe this simple rule. The Committee ask that these tenants please observe and uphold the rules of the Association.

FANCY GETTING REALLY INVOLVED AT NATIONAL LEVEL?.....

Due to a retirement, the West Midlands Region of our National Association are looking to recruit a *regional representative* male or female to replace Maurice Lander. Applications are required before August 31st. Let Lily know for details of how to apply.

A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS.....

Membership is now open for anyone who would like to join the 'FRIENDS OF ABBEY FIELDS'. Costing only £7.50 per year, it is tremendous value and a worthy cause where we can get involved in what happens at the Abbey Fields through working alongside District Council and at the same time enjoy taking part in bat walks and bird walks with knowledgeable speakers and experts in those fields. Light planting work or litter picking events are optional, and overall it is a very worthy community activity to be involved in. For more details, please contact Joan Rockett on 01926 863143

A LITTLE PERSON'S BLUE SOCKS.....

Were found on the Lower Ladyes Hill side on the main track (Odibourne site) abandoned by the stepping stones about a month ago. They were soaking wet, and the owner obviously abandoned them for comfort! They have been washed and dried and are available for collection. Contact Lily!!!

CONGRATULATIONS.....

Our youngest member, Oscar Thomas Lord arrived on 22nd April this year. Belated congratulations to mum & dad on plot 28b Odibourne site

AND FINALLY, TO ROUND THE YEAR OFF.....

The Committee organise a Presentation evening to celebrate the achievements of tenants who have won awards, cups and trophies throughout the year. The Mayor is invited to present these awards. The venue once again is the Royal British Legion and a superb buffet is on offer. Get there early to get a good seat. Starts at 7.30pm. Your final date for this year's allotment diary: 14th November 2014.