



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



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2015

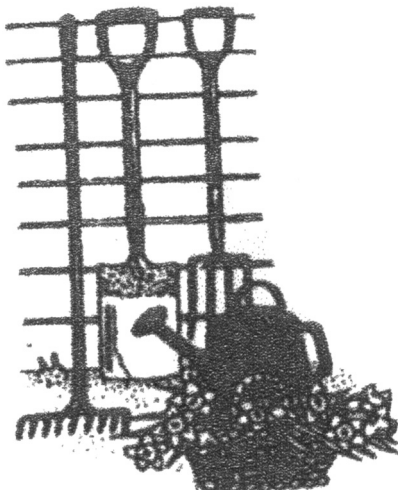
A belated 'Happy New Year' to all of you from all the Committee at K.A.T.A! We hope you had an enjoyable festive season and are well rested and looking forward to a reinvigorated gardening year ahead. Some of us generally go into hibernation of sorts over the winter with regard to our plots, especially when it's cold, wet and muddy or a thaw makes frosted ground rather slippery and cloggy. This year's seemingly prolonged wall to wall grey cloud above doesn't help boost enthusiasm either. However, now that there have been some short breaks of sparkling wintry sunshine overhead, the plots are showing signs of human activity and gradually we are all emerging back out there to meet up with friends and generally see what's been happening.

There may not have been much activity on the plots over the last couple of months, but this does not mean that your Committee have not been busy plotting – sorry, planning for the year ahead....Someone once referred to our job as 'keeping the wheels turning' and this is a fairly accurate description of what really does happen in any well run Association. Much of this work involves planning our diary for the year to come, and pinning down commitments from judges and Town Mayors, booking venues, setting up rotas, organising meetings, assessing stock levels and of course site maintenance including hedgecutting. Not forgetting that for help with all the forthcoming events and projects, we also rely heavily for backup from amongst the many willing volunteers within our tenancy and once again we thank you all for that support.

Contributors welcome.....

As with last year's 'new style' newsletter, our primary intention is to simply keep you informed (to the best of our ability) of what is happening/has happened or is about to happen in matters which will affect you and your allotment. However, there may be some of you out there who have specialist knowledge in some areas of for example cultivation, propagation, grafting, pruning, composting, bee or chicken keeping, nature, birds and general wildlife, which would be of interest to those with a likeminded approach to allotment gardening. As we know, our allotments also provide a haven for a huge diversity of wildlife. We would really love to hear from you as this is **your** newsletter to use and share your expertise if you would like the opportunity to do so. It could be of great benefit and enlightenment if some of you out there could also share your knowledge with our newer and inexperienced allotment gardeners. Maybe we could introduce a 'tips and hints' section? Please contact us with your suggestions and ideas of how we could best extend the use and improve the content of our newsletter.

Sadly, I have to announce that towards the end of last year, two of our long term tenants on the Odibourne site passed away. We were sorry to hear of the sudden and unexpected death of Barry Wiggins. Barry helped the Committee for many years as auditor of our accounts. He did a splendid job, but behind the scenes he also worked tirelessly for the Charity REMAP. In fact Barry was one of the founder members in 1994. Shortly after Barry died, we lost Billy Skinner, who had not been too well for some



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

months. Billy did a superb job many years ago in shoring up the very steep path on the approach to the gate at the 'Engine' entrance to Odibourne. They will both be sadly missed and our sincere condolences go to both their families.

But to happier newsWe would like to welcome some youngsters into our fold at Odibourne. Alfie Fox Townsend was born on 13th August weighing 6lbs 7oz. Congratulations to proud parents Tammy and Danny on plot 87.

On 10th September, another arrival – Will Higginbotham, weighing in at 8lbs 9oz was born to Sara and James on plot 84. Congratulations once again to you both.

Lily Brownjohn, Allotment Secretary

Since our last newsletter (August 2014).....

Our AGM took place on October 23rd 2014. A disappointingly small number of tenants attended and the following is a very much abbreviated version of that meeting:

AGM Thursday 23rd October 2014 at The Copper House Club (formerly The Royal British Legion Club)

The Chairman reported that it had been another challenging gardening year, but that in the main, good crops had been produced and all our events had been successful, both financially and from a PR point of view. Good relationships continued to be built with most local agencies. He thanked all the volunteers who had helped in maintaining this pleasing situation.

The Treasurer gave a full and comprehensive breakdown of expenditure and income. As agreed by Committee he had broken our funds into three designated areas, (1) A general fund for day to day running costs, (2) A fund designated for special projects ie building of a toilet block and (3) An contingency fund (for emergencies). He made clear that our healthy financial position was not from rent income, but from our efforts over the years in fund-raising events and from the income generated from shop sales and from re-cycling sales of sheds, greenhouses and sundry gardening items. Once again, he confirmed that there would be no rent increase for 2015/2016. A full and detailed financial report will be displayed within the Trading shed. He was thanked by the Chairman.

Any other business included the approach to the Lower Ladies Hills side of Odibourne site. The difficult slope prohibited for example deliveries of manure to individual plots. Committee to discuss remedying this problem.

Presentation Evening on Friday November 14th 2014.....

Was a different kettle of fish altogether!!! It was almost standing room only at the Old Copper House Club. The event was extremely well attended and it was good to see and welcome so many youngsters allowed to be out late as it was a 'no school in the morning' night out! The Mayor, Councillor John Cooke presented the cups and trophies and the raffle

table groaned with delightful prizes geared towards the forthcoming Christmas festive season. The Mayor declared that he had *never* witnessed such a lengthy raffle draw! Thank you to anyone who also donated prizes to the raffle table. Amongst those, we must give a special thanks to Chris Saunderson who has for the past few years donated a print of his wonderful paintings of our Allotments. He creates these paintings at our Open Day on Odibourne, taking a different view each year. He then donates a print from the original to our raffle table at Presentation Evening. They are a much coveted prize. Sadly we no longer have sponsorship from Les Beard from Kenilworth Gardening and Pets store at Abbey End. Les and Betty have supported the allotments for many years and for that we thank them both. Les is currently battling ill health, so we wish him well. Our thanks from Committee go to Madeleine once again for organising such a wonderful buffet and to Judith, Annie and Jane, who also give us their support and help on the evening.

And so into the New Year.....

Our first thoughts instinctively turn to sowing of seeds, and for those of you who took advantage of our King's Seed Catalogue in the Autumn, (making a saving of around 40% on shop prices), you will already have been fortunate enough to have had them delivered to your doors. Once again we have to thank Chris for this. He not only collates all the orders, sends them off and when they arrive he then personally delivers them to your door all in good time for our sowing season. How spoilt (and so very lucky) are we? Thank-you Chris from all of us!

So now let's talk shop.....

Although this Winter seems to have been rather a gloomy and long one, spirits were lifted at our first meeting of the New Year in more ways than one! Our shop volunteers are always invited to a pre-season meeting and drinks are with compliments from K.A.T.A. The meeting took place on Thursday 22nd January at the Old Copper House Club, the intention being to thank all those who give up part of their precious weekends to help run the shop for the benefit of our K.A.T.A. members. A detailed report of our previous years trading was presented by our Treasurer Mark and both Chairman Mike and Robin & Sue, our Shop Managers presided over the evening. Our volunteers make known their availability for the forthcoming year and are invited to propose ideas to improve both our service and stock for the benefit of our members, their families and friends. The following invitation/promo is from Sue and Robin:

'We keep a good range of branded composts, fertilisers, including organic. We stock canes, netting, herbicides and pesticides and all sorts of gardening bits and pieces, all at very competitive prices. We also sell a lot of the fertilisers such as Growmore, Bonemeal and Chicken Manure pellets in small 2.5 kg bags for convenience, some at only £1.00 a bag! There's also the wonderful recycling corner – always well worth a look for a bargain, whether it's a lawnmower for £4.00, some beautiful clay pots in all shapes and sizes from £1.00 a pot, or a thing for putting things/compost/stuff in- is it a wormery? ALL RUN BY OUR LOVELY, HELPFUL AND KNOWLEDGABLE VOLUNTEERS, SO COME AND HAVE A LOOK'!!!

Just arrived in our re-cycling corner.....

A considerable amount of greenhouse glass – £2.00 per 2' square panes, £1.50 per 2'x18" panes. Odd 'end' shapes 50p small and £1.00 medium. An absolute bargain at roughly half the cost of new.

Also for your convenience and for the benefit of all.....

Another welcome addition is the delivery of well-rotted manure to two of our sites. This was delivered to Odibourne and Beehive Hill sites at the end of last year whilst the ground was still firm. A nominal charge of £2.00 per barrow load (to be paid into the shop please) is charged for the convenience of delivery to your site. The deliveries have stopped during the wet weather as the farmer cannot get his tractor into his fields, the ground now being too soft. As soon as the ground firms up, we will resume deliveries.

SHOP OPENING TIMES FOR 2015 : SATURDAY & SUNDAY MORNINGS

Starting from w/e Sat 14th & Sun 15th February –
ONE HOUR ONLY – NOTE NEW TIME: 11AM-12NOON

From March through to end of September –
TWO HOURS – 10AM-12NOON

Throughout October until Sunday 25th –
BACK TO ONE HOUR ONLY – 11AM – 12NOON

News from our three sites.....

Spring Lane

We all have to share our allotment sites with some form of wildlife, be it slugs, pigeons and rabbits to foxes, moles, muntjack and badgers. Spring Lane suffers the most damage from badgers and legislation prevents us from using any forceful method to stop them. Therefore this year out of sheer frustration following crops confirmed as being dug up by them, Chris is going to erect some substantial fencing around the site to simply re-direct the badgers around the perimeter in the hope that they will no longer get onto the allotments.

Beehive Hill

A work party has cleared the overgrown plot 1, which was the redundant wheelchair user's plot. New plans for a plot for wheelchair users are being formulated for relocation to the Odibourne site for practical reasons. There is still a good amount of well-rotted woodchip at the rear of the Beehive site and anyone is welcome to help themselves. This could be used as mulch or for suppressing weeds or for paths. We ask for a donation of £1.00 per wheelbarrow full or bag your own using old redundant compost bags (to be paid into the shop please).

Keith and Catherine would like to convey their thanks to the willing helpers on the rota, which was set up to keep the main path well-trimmed. An excellent job is being done

Odibourne site

Chairman Mike has announced that he will be retiring from work this year, which he says will allow him more time to move forward with our projects for the Odibourne site. The main projects being the toilet block/secure storage area and a small bridge across the river at the Washbrook Bridge end of the site, which we hope will ultimately increase footfall into our shop. And Odibourne tenants are ever grateful to Richard who mows around the whole 7 acres!

And from our friends within the Community (SEE ALSO BACK PAGE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST).....

Kenilworth Horticultural Society are welcoming new members. They meet once a month at the Old Folks Club, Abbey End, and an entertaining and informative speaker is usually booked for the evening. Membership for the year is only £10, but if you would like to pay a visit as a one off or a guest to give it a try, a charge of £3.50 is applicable. Please contact the Secretary Myra Wilkinson on 858300 for further details

Garden Organic at Ryton on Dunsmore are looking to recruit Volunteer Gardeners and Tour Guides to support them in their newly remodelled gardens. If you are interested, further information can be seen on our notice boards. Please contact Jane Eite on 02476 308208 if you would like to be involved.

Hinton's Nurseries: Our friend Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton – (also one of our judges) has some super offers for our members including seed potatoes, garlic, onions and shallots and for the first time there will be plug plants available. Stocks will include Geraniums and Fuchsias to Begonias and basket plants. As it is Sarah's first year stocking plug plants and therefore something of a trial, they will only be available for a couple of weeks at the end of March. Customers will be welcome to come and reserve in advance to guarantee their purchases. A 10% discount is available on all of the above, but also there is a 25-50% discount on bird feeders and nest boxes on production of an **Allotment membership/ID card***.

***Contact Lily for card**

Guys Cliffe Walled Garden: If you remember from our August newsletter last year, I introduced Dr Barry Meatyard, Botanist and Chairman of the Guys Cliffe Walled Garden Trust (also one of our judges). Volunteers are once again invited to get involved with the restoration of these historic gardens and dates for future work parties are as follows: 13th, 17th, 25th & 28th Feb, and 14th, 18th, 22nd, 27th March. Further details can be obtained by contacting guyscliffewalledgarden@gmail.com

Russells Garden Centre have been friends of our Allotments for many years, with the late Brian Russell having donated several tons of topsoil for the creation of our raised beds on our Educational Plot. Following devastating floods a couple of years ago, his daughter Kate continued the generous support by replenishing the washed away topsoil. Kate has supplied us with flyers/inserts for our newsletter offering discounts off some stock items for Allotment holders. **Allotment membership/ID cards are again requested***.

***Contact Lily for card**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Jan	Thurs 22nd	Shop meeting
Feb	Sat 14th	Shop re-opens (see opening times above with shop report)
April	beginning of	Notices will go up to giving roughly one month's notice pre plot inspections
May	beginning of	Plot inspections will be carried out by Committee
May	30th/31st	Stall at Talisman Square for Foodie Fortnight – date/w/end yet to be confirmed.
June	Sat 13th	Lion's Show
June	Sun 21st	Open Gardens at Beehive Hill
July	(w/comm Mon 13th)	Judging of plots (Actual date to be notified)
Aug	10th – 16th	(National Allotment week)
Aug	Sun 16th	Open Day held at Odibourne
Aug	end of	Measuring of tallest sunflower
Aug	29th /30th	Notices advising payment of rent will be displayed
Sept	Sat 19th Sun 20th	Rent collecting in shed by committee
Sept	Sat 26th Sun 27th	Rent collecting in shed by committee
Oct	Sun 4th/11th	Pumpkin weigh in at Engine (date to be confirmed) – New start time 12.30
Oct	Thurs 22nd	AGM
Nov	Fri 13th	Presentation evening at the Copper House Club



Best Cultivated Plot – Judging Schedule for 2015

Category	Points
CULTIVATION AND CROPPING	
Types of produce (1/2 point each type).....	15
Seasonal Produce (Extra point for Winter/Spring produce)	
Soft fruit (1 point each type – includes rhubarb).....	5
Attractive features (flowers etc)	5
Herbs (1 point each type)	5
Quality of crops.....	10
HUSBANDRY	
Compost/manure heap (quality of)	10
Freedom from Annual weeds	10
Freedom from Perennial weeds.....	10
Rubbish (freedom from)	5
Label showing variety and maturity cropping time	5
ENVIRONMENT	
Rain water saving.....	5
Plot number prominently displayed	5
Paths/roads neatly maintained.....	5
Judges discretion – the 'wow' factor for that extra 5%	5
TOTAL:	100

Have you volunteered yet?.....

As you can see above, we have a busy schedule planned for our diary for 2015. If you can help with any of the events, please let us know by contacting Paula in the first instance. Paula can be reached on 856480. Even if you can only spare an hour at some of the events, manning a stall or selling raffle tickets, we really do appreciate your time. Some tenants are prepared to spend the whole day at an event, others just a couple of hours. Whatever you can manage, it all helps if we share the load. We usually have a lot of fun and it is really waving the flag for Allotments if we take advantage of this opportunity to interact with the public in a positive way.

Still on thoughts of events.....

Do you have a tow-bar on your vehicle? Sometimes we might need an extra bit of help transporting plants to the Abbey Fields or into town for our events Please contact Paula if you can help. K.A.T.A. does have a small light trailer for such use. Please let Paula know on: 856480

MORE ITEMS OF INTEREST.....

A Bee keeping taster day is to be held on Saturday 16th May at Bourton on Dunsmore, near Rugby from 10am until 4.30pm. Costing only £23, this is an ideal way to see if it is for you. Please either ring Tim Attractive features (flowers etc) Foden on 632388 or email tim_foden@hotmail.com

A special request.....to please be patient until the paths dry out before bringing vehicles on site. A greenhouse has recently been damaged due to a car with possibly a trailer in tow. This happened on the Lower Ladyes Hills main track and the greenhouse framework was dented at trailer height. Several panes of glass have been broken. No-one has yet owned up!