

THE PLOTHOLDER

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER No.10 - MAY 2001

OPEN DAY AT THE PADDOCKS - 80 years young. It seemed as if summer would never come - and now the Longest Day is almost here. On **Sunday 24 June** we celebrate our 80th birthday: our licence to use the Royal Paddocks was granted on 30 June 1921. Last year our first Open Day was a great success. Let's make this one even better.

Can you help welcome visitors, give a cake or preserves for a produce stall, or a small tombola prize? Or bring some food to share for lunch? We will provide a barbecue and drinks, as always at very reasonable prices. Bring non-perishable donations to the office on Sunday 10 or 17 June between 11 a.m. and midday.

The back page of this issue is a poster - *please display it*. To help us plan, there's also a tear-off slip - please fill it in and put it in the mailbox by the main gate. **COME FOR THE DAY, AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS.**



PLOTHOLDERS DO IT IN BULK Picture the scene. A group of people who all like growing their own vegetables, and happen to have their gardens side by side, notice that they all visit their local hardware shop or garden centre to buy similar little packets of seeds, boxes of fertiliser, bundles of canes, bags of onion sets and seed potatoes. One day, a brainwave strikes one of them. 'We could save ourselves time, petrol and money by buying all these things in bulk, and having them delivered to our gardens!'

Sounds like a good idea? Then you'll be glad to know that the brainwave struck the resourceful Mr Newman in 1917. A tenant of the Hampton Allotments, he was the brains behind the seedstore, now run by Hampton & District Allotments & Gardens Ltd.(HDAG), and an impressively large operation it is. For much of the last century its trading centre was the Brew House on the Hampton site, but when this was designated a listed building the organisation moved its headquarters to its store in Bear Road, Hanworth. The Bear Road site was itself once allotments, and the store was erected by tenants, using a 'kit' for a village hall. An extension housing an office was added later by the builder who developed the surrounding land.

If you go into the Bear Road store you find yourself in an Aladdin's Cave of all kinds of gardening goods, stacked high on shelves and pallets. The company is affiliated to the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners, whose discount ordering scheme means that all goods are well below shop prices - seeds, for example, are 50% cheaper. Ordering stock in sufficient quantity to get a good deal is a matter for careful judgement every season by the committee, all volunteers, who have an annual budget of several thousand pounds.

There are three branches of HDAG, at Hanworth, Shepperton, and of course at the Paddocks, where George Harmsworth opens shop between 10 a.m. and midday each Sunday. Trading is open to anyone who pays £1 to register each year (this includes purchase of a share certificate). You need not be an allotment holder to get benefit of the bargains. But mysteriously, they are short of traders - and like many voluntary organisations, short of volunteer help. Perhaps the opening hours don't suit everyone - could there be an ordering system? A copy of the 2001 handbook was included in every copy of the last *Plotholder*, and more are available at the Seedstore. Let's support this joint enterprise and the dedicated group who run it.

Thanks to Mr J.H. Bollom, group trading secretary and treasurer, who provided this information. He's been associated with the company since 1957.

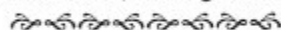
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WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS: Chantal Diep-The-Phu and Suzanna Wright (31f), Caroline Evans (48b), Helen Sidey helping Richard Stickney on 30, John Snell (168b), Geraldine Locke and family on 63f, Janet and Simon Hosein (125), Donna Barron (43b), and Philip Brew and Nichola Farnum on 115. Thanks, Nichola, for also joining the Plotolders' Committee.
... AND WE SAY GOODBYE to Karen and David Bryan, who recently moved to Shalford.

JUDGEMENT DAY The final judging for this year's BEST KEPT PLOT contest will take place on Sunday 5 August. Once again, some of the Plotolders' Committee will choose the winners, and like last year, points will be awarded for a well-managed, well-presented plot with a good variety of produce. Newcomers who've taken on a particularly challenging plot will have this taken into consideration. The shortlist will be compiled after the last plot inspection in mid-July, and you'll be notified if you're on it, in case you want to do some last-minute grooming. Good luck!

OUR LOCAL SHOW is Hampton Court Flower Show, and as an RHS Affiliated Society we can spend a day there for £16 each, (a £3 reduction on the price to the public), if we book a group of 10 or more in advance. The days available to us are 5 - 8 July. We must all choose the same day, but don't all have to go in together, I'm told.

RHS shows in London are also open to us. The Autumn fruit and vegetable show at Vincent Square is on 9 - 10 October, and the group price to us on day 2 is £1 each. **If you're interested in joining a group, contact Susan before 11 June, stating which days you would not be free.**



ESTATE MANAGEMENT *We had a wonderfully invigorating Clearing Day in March, levelling and burning the bramble on plot 128. Despite the cold (barely above freezing), it was bright and sunny, and there was no time for the chill to get to us.*

Our hot lunch break was very welcome: thanks, Ann Jones, for the baked potatoes, and Christine Thorpe for beer, sausages, and delicious artichoke soup - a dish of Paddocks produce best eaten in the open air . . . Thanks too, to George Loosemore, who having dug his own plot from end to end, has done a lot of clearing this winter elsewhere on site. And welcome to the Branch family, recently arrived on 127, who generously gave help even though their own plot is pretty overgrown.

We had another go in April, on another sunny day, making a start on plot numbering and defining boundaries. Though these look very neat on the site map, it's a different matter on the ground, and this enterprise will take time. Still, we must make sure new tenants know which bit is theirs - last year someone made a valiant start on the wrong half . . .

THE GATES, though new, are still not right, and we are sorry about this. Ray Brodie has been to look at them, and agrees they need re-installing, which he says will be done ASAP.

RUBBISH - till Mike is back in action we still don't have use of the lorry. When we do, which should not be long now, we'll give priority to people who take on a plot already containing someone else's rubbish.



AT YOUR CONVENIENCE . . . *There hasn't been what you could call a flood of offers in response to the request in the last Plotholder - that's it, the one asking users to help with maintaining the Elsan toilet. Manifestly, the 'facility' is meeting a need, and in response to this it's getting a new seat and lid. We'll also make it possible to close the door more satisfactorily. Thank you, Helga, for offering help - one or two more would be very welcome.*

I can't think why, but this is reminding me of a story I once heard about Marie Lloyd. She had in her repertoire a song about a young lady who goes into the garden 'and sits among the cabbages and peas'. When asked to remove this indelicate double entendre from her song, Marie simply changed the name of the final vegetable to 'leeks'..

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JOHN FRITH of plot 98 provided some excellent gooseberry jam for sale at last year's Open Day. He did some more preserving later that year, and now sends us a recipe for

APPLE WINE

John writes: Last year I noticed a lot of windfall apples on the allotments, and collected some to make apple wine. There were a lot more than I could use, so others might like to try my recipe, which is adapted from the Good Housekeeping Cookbook. The mixture of metric and imperial measures is intentional, to fit both our kitchen equipment and modern packaging.

INGREDIENTS: 1 pack CWE wine yeast, 18lbs apples, 2 kg white sugar.

EQUIPMENT: 2 gallon plastic bucket with lid, several 5 litre glass jars fitted with corks and airlocks, Camden tablets, nylon mesh bag, colander or draining spoon, more jars or bottles for the finished product.

METHOD: Prepare yeast 5 or 6 hours ahead of the apples, following the instructions on the container. Put the mix of yeast, sugar and water into a small jar, cover with kitchen paper and put to ferment in the airing cupboard, or somewhere warm.

Next, the apples. A mix of cooking and eating apples gives a good flavour, but too many ripe apples gives a cloudy wine. Cut 18lbs apples into bite-size pieces, removing rotten bits and caterpillar mess. No need to peel or core them, but wash them well, and put them in the bucket with a gallon and a half of cold tap water. Add the yeast, which should now be working well, stir thoroughly, and put the bucket in a warm place, carefully covered against flies with a cloth and a lid. Stir it vigorously once or twice each day.

After 4 or 5 days the apples will be turning brown and soft. Remove the pieces (I use a colander), and pour the juice through a fine nylon mesh bag into a second bucket containing 2 kg white sugar. Stir till the sugar dissolves, then pour the juice (or must, as it is now properly called) into the 5 litre jars, which will be filled to the shoulder. Cork these with the airlocks, and put somewhere warm to ferment, perhaps the airing cupboard again. The initial fermentation may be vigorous, so examine the jars daily, giving them a gentle swirl to release any trapped gas. Top up the water in the airlocks as necessary. After a week or so, move the jars to a cool room to continue fermenting slowly, till the must is clear, and no more bubbles are released into the airlock during the daily swirl.

Now siphon off the wine into clean jars, filling them to within an inch of the cork, add a Camden tablet to each jar to stop further fermentation, cork and put into a cool place. For drinking, siphon the wine off again (this is known as racking), as a little sediment will have settled. I don't bother to bottle the wine, as it can be siphoned off into a jug for drinking, and doesn't deteriorate if kept covered.

September's wine should be ready by Christmas, but may improve with keeping - in our house it's never kept more than a year! If you find it too dry or strong, try mixing it with fizzy water, tonic, lemonade or Appletise as a long drink.

Five litre jars used to come full of sherry, but are scarce now. I have a few spare, otherwise look out for them at car boot sales, or buy them new from Art of Brewing, 42 Richmond Road, Kingston, who also stock all the other equipment you are likely to need.

Thank you John - any chance of sampling last year's vintage at the Open Day, or is it just a happy memory now?

SOUNDS FISHY Bob Flowerdew was recently heard offering the following advice on Radio 4: When you plant out your sweetcorn seedlings, do as the American Indians did, and bury a piece of old fish under each plant. This will promote strong fruitful growth. Two questions spring to mind: Do the Indians still do this? and Is there any significance in the date of the broadcast (1 April)? If anyone tries this, let us know the results you get.



**Plots
Available
Now!**

**2001
PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS
OPEN DAY**

and 80th birthday celebration!

Sunday 24th June

12.30pm – 4pm

at the

Paddocks Allotments

Park Road, Hampton Wick



**Come and find out about the joys of
growing (and eating) your own produce –
AND have an afternoon of fun!**



**barbecue lunch · drinks · cake stall ·
tombola · prize quiz · guided tours
of the available plots**

Please complete this tear-off slip and post it in the mailbox by the main gate.

I would like meat sausage(s) in a bun (70p each)

I would like vegetarian sausage(s) in a bun (70p each)

I will be bringing visitors

I can help in the following way

Name and phone number

To contribute to The Plotholder contact Susan Saunders, 8977 4675. Letters and comments welcome.